

PROMISES TO KEEP

Promises to Keep

A study of the Election Manifestoes of
Indian National Congress 1937—1985

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TO MY NEPHEW
SAOOD AHMED

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FOREWORD

The General Elections in India are not only a big national enterprise but also a great experiment in democracy. Since independence India has had eight General Elections. All the political parties recognised at the time of the elections had taken part in the elections and issued their election manifestoes as part of their campaign.

An election campaign has two aspects, one purely educative and the other general propaganda. In the conditions of India, while the second aspect will be preponderant, the interest of the people and the nation demands that the educative aspect must be predominant. What is needed is a helpful approach to the problems of the people with a view to carry them with the party entering into the campaign and not merely to gain their votes. The election manifesto is a tool for achieving this end.

I hope this book which is a collection of Congress election manifestoes will prove to be of inestimable value for scholars and political scientists.

—MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI

INTRODUCTION

The Indian National Congress, in the course of its long history of active mass contact, has always striven to convey the message of liberty, democracy and social justice to the millions of India. Without mass education of that kind, peaceful elections at such a big scale by so many millions would have been difficult of achievement.

India has had eight General Elections so far. The whole hearted participation of a number of political parties in the elections has been a notable feature. It has been admitted on all hands that the elections have been free and fare and have been held in a truly democratic atmosphere. A large number of independent candidates not attached to any party have tried their luck in all these elections. But the political parties always deprecated this tendency as a result of which very few independents are returned.

The Congress Party, like all other principal political parties has been issuing an election manifesto before each election to educate the electorate about the achievements of the Congress rule and the tasks that lie ahead. The present work which is a *collection of Congress election manifestoes from 1937 to 1985* will be a great help to those who undertake a critical study of the promises and performance of the Congress Party during that period.

A. M. Z.

*Full Texts of the
Election Manifestoes*

Assemblies Elections—1937

TEXT OF THE ELECTION MANIFESTO

For more than fifty years the Indian National Congress has laboured for the freedom of India, and ever, as its strength grew and it came to represent more and more the nationalist urge of the Indian people and their desire to put an end to exploitation by British Imperialism, it came into conflict with the ruling power. During recent years the Congress has led great movements for national freedom and has sought to develop sanctions whereby such freedom can be achieved by peaceful mass action and the disciplined sacrifice and suffering of the Indian people. To the lead of the Congress the Indian people have responded in abundant measure and thus confirmed their inherent right to freedom. That struggle for freedom still continues and must continue till India is free and independent.

These years have seen the development of an economic crisis in India and the world which has led to a progressive deterioration in the condition of all classes of our people. The poverty stricken masses are today in the grip of an even more abject poverty and destitution, and this growing disease urgently and insistently demands a radical remedy. Poverty and unemployment have long been the lot of our peasantry and industrial workers ; today they cover and crush other classes also—the artisan, the trader, the small merchant, the middle class intelligentsia. For the vast millions of our countrymen the problem of achieving national independence has become an urgent one, for only independence can give us the power to solve our economic and social problems and end the exploitation of our masses.

The growth of the national movement and the economic

crisis has resulted in the intense repression of the Indian people and the suppression of civil liberties, and the British Government has sought to strengthen the imperialist bonds that envelop India and to perpetuate the domination and exploitation of the Indian people by enacting the Government of India Act of 1935.

In the international sphere, crisis follows crisis in an ever deepening degree and world war hangs over the horizon. The Lucknow Congress called the attention of the nation to this grave situation in India and the world, and declared its opposition to the participation of India in an imperialist war and its firm resolve to continue the struggle for the independence of India.

The Congress rejected in its entirety the constitution imposed upon India by the New Act and declared that no constitution imposed by outside authority and no constitution which curtails the sovereignty of the people of India, and does not recognise their right to shape and control fully their political and economic future, can be accepted. Such a constitution, in its opinion, must be based on the independence of India as a nation and it can only be framed by a Constituent Assembly.

The Congress has always laid stress on the development of the strength of the people and the forging of sanctions to enforce the people's will. To this end it has carried on activities outside the legislatures. The Congress holds that real strength comes from thus organising and serving the masses.

Adhering to this policy and objective, but in the view of the present situation and in order to prevent the operation of forces calculated to strengthen alien domination and exploitation, the Congress decided to contest seats in the coming elections for the provincial legislatures. But the purpose of sending Congressmen to the legislatures under the new Act is not to cooperate in any way with the Act but to combat it and seek to end it. It is to carry out, in so far as is possible, the Congress policy of rejection of the Act, and to resist British Imperialism in its attempts to strengthen its hold on India and its exploitation of the Indian people. In the opinion of

the Congress, activity in the legislatures should be such as to help in the work outside, in the strengthening of the people, and in the development of the sanctions which are essential to freedom.

The new legislatures, hedged and circumscribed by safeguards and special powers for the protection of British and other vested interests, cannot yield substantial benefits, and they are totally incapable of solving the vital problems of poverty and unemployment. But they may well be used by British imperialism for its own purposes to the disadvantage and injury of the Indian people. The Congress representatives will seek to resist this, and to take all possible steps to end the various Regulations, Ordinances and Acts which oppress the Indian people and smother their will to freedom. They will work for the establishment of civil liberty, for the release of political prisoners and detenus, and to repair the wrongs done to the peasantry and to public institutions in the course of the national struggle.

The Congress realises that independence cannot be achieved through these legislatures, nor can the problems of poverty and unemployment be effectively tackled by them. Nevertheless the Congress places its general programme before the people of India so that they may know what it stands for and what it will try to achieve, whenever it has the power to do so.

At the Karachi session of the Congress in 1931 the general Congress objective was defined in the Fundamental Rights resolution. That general definition still holds. The last five years of developing crisis have however necessitated a further consideration of the problems of poverty and unemployment and other economic problems. With a view to this the Lucknow Congress laid particular stress on the fact that "the most important and urgent problem of the country is the appalling poverty, unemployment and indebtedness of the peasantry, fundamentally due to antiquated and repressive land tenure and revenue systems, and intensified in recent years by the great slump in prices of agricultural produce," and called upon the Provincial Congress Committees to frame full agrarian programmes. The agrarian programme which will be drawn

up by the AICC on the basis of these provincial programmes will be issued later.

Pending the formulation of a fuller programme the Congress reiterates its declaration made at Karachi—that it stands for a reform of the system of land tenure and revenue and rent, and an equitable adjustment of the burden of agricultural land, giving immediate relief to the smaller peasantry by a substantial reduction of agricultural rent and revenue now paid by them and exempting uneconomic holdings from payment of rent and revenue.

The question of indebtedness requires urgent consideration and the formulation of a scheme including the declaration of a moratorium, an enquiry into and scaling down of debts and the provision for cheap credit facilities by the state. This relief should extend to the agricultural tenants, peasant proprietors, small landholders, and petty traders.

In regard to industrial workers the policy of the Congress, is to secure to them a decent standard of living, hours of work and conditions of labour in conformity, as far as the economic conditions in the country permit, with international standards, suitable machinery for the settlement of disputes between employers and workmen, protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness and unemployment and the right of workers to form unions and to strike for the protection of their interests.

The Congress has already declared that it stands for the removal of all sex disabilities whether legal or social or in any sphere of public activity. It has expressed itself in favour of, maternity benefits and the protection of women workers. The women of India have already taken a leading part in the freedom struggle, and the Congress looks forward to their sharing, in an equal measure with the men of India, the privileges and obligations of citizens of a free India.

The stress that the Congress has laid on the removal of untouchability and for the social and economic uplift of the Harijans and the backward classes is well-known. It holds that, they should be equal citizens with the others, with equal rights, in all civic matters.

The encouragement of khadi and village industries has also long been a principal plank of the Congress programme. In regard to the larger industries, protection should be given but the rights of the workers and the producers of raw materials should be safeguarded, and due regard should be paid to the interests of village industries.

The treatment of political prisoners has long been a scandal in India. Every effort should be made to improve this and make it humane. It is equally necessary to change the whole basis of the prison administration so that every prisoner might be treated in a humanitarian and rational manner.

The communal decision, which forms part of the new Act, has led to much controversy and the Congress attitude towards it has been misunderstood by some people. The rejection in its entirety of the new Act by the Congress inevitably involves the rejection of the communal decision. Even apart from the Act as a whole, the communal decision is wholly unacceptable as being inconsistent with independence and the principles of democracy, it encourages fissiparous and disruptive tendencies, hinders the normal growth and consideration of economic and social questions, is a barrier to national progress, and strikes at the root of Indian unity. No community or group in India profits by it in any real sense, for the larger injury caused by it to all outweighs the petty benefits that some have received. Ultimately it probably injures most those groups whom it is meant to favour. The only party that profits by it is the third party which rules and exploits us.

The attitude of the Congress is, therefore, not one of indifference or neutrality. It disapproves strongly of the communal decision and would like to end it. But the Congress has repeatedly laid stress on the fact that a satisfactory solution of the communal question can come only through the goodwill and cooperation of the principal communities concerned. An attempt by one group to get some communal favour from the British Government at the expense of another group results in an increase of communal tension and the exploitation of both groups by the Government. Such a policy is hardly in keeping with the dignity of Indian nationalism ; it does not fit in with

the struggle for independence. It does not pay either party in the long run ; it sidetracks the main issue.

The Congress, therefore, holds that the right way to deal with the situation created by the communal decision is to intensify our struggle for independence and, at the same time, to seek a common basis for an agreed solution which helps to strengthen the unity of India. The effort of one community only to change the decision in the face of the opposition of another community might well result in confirming and consolidating that decision, for conflict between the two produces the very situation which gives Governments a chance of enforcing such a decision. The Congress thus is of opinion that such one-sided agitation can bear no useful result.

It is necessary to bear in mind that the whole communal problem in spite of its importance, has nothing to do with the major problems of India—poverty and wide-spread unemployment. It is not a religious problem and it affects only a handful of people at the top. The peasantry, the workers, the traders and merchants and the lower middle classes of all communities are in no way touched by it and their burdens remain.

The question of accepting ministries or not in the new legislatures was postponed for decision by the Lucknow Congress. The AICC is of opinion that it will be desirable for this decision to be taken after the elections. Whatever the decision on this question might be, it must be remembered that, in any event, the Congress stands for the rejection of the new Act, and for non-cooperation in its working. The object remains the same: the ending of the Act. With a view to this end every endeavour will be made to prevent the introduction and functioning of the federal part of the scheme, which is intended to perpetuate the domination of imperialist interests and the feudal interests of the States over the whole country and prevent all progress towards freedom. It must be borne in mind that the new provincial assemblies will form the electorate for the proposed federal central legislature and the composition of those provincial legislatures will materially affect the fate of the federal constitution.

We appeal to the country to give every support to the

Congress in the elections that are coming. National welfare demands it. The fight for independence calls for it. The effectiveness of the work that the Congress members of the legislatures will do, will depend on their numbers and their discipline and the backing and support that the country gives them. With a clear majority they will be in a position to fight the Act and to help effectively in the struggle for independence. Every party and group that stands aloof from the Congress organisation tends, knowingly or unknowingly, to become a source of weakness to the nation and a source of strength to the forces ranged against it. For the fight for independence a joint front is necessary. The Congress offers that joint national front which comprises all classes and communities, bound together by their desire to free India, and the exploitation of her people and build up a strong and prosperous and united nation, resting on the well-being of the masses.

With this great and inspiring goal before us, for which so many men and women of India have suffered and sacrificed *their all under the banner of the Congress*, and for which to-day thousands of our countrymen are suffering silently and with brave endurance, we call upon our people with full hope and confidence, to rally to the cause of the Congress, of India, of freedom.

Assemblies Elections—1945-46

TEXT OF THE ELECTION MANIFESTO

For sixty years the National Congress has laboured for the freedom of India. During this long span of years its history has been the history of the Indian people straining at the least that has held them in bondage, ever trying to unloose themselves from it. From small beginnings it has progressively grown and spread in this vast country, carrying the message of freedom to the masses of our people in the towns as well as the remotest village. From these masses it has gained power and strength and developed into a mighty organisation, the living and vibrant symbol of India's will to freedom and independence. From generation to generation it has dedicated itself to this sacred cause, and in its name and under its banner innumerable countrymen and countrywomen of ours have laid down their lives and undergone sufferings in order to redeem the pledge they had taken. By service and sacrifice it has enshrined itself in the hearts of our people; by its refusal to submit to any dishonour to our nation it has built up a powerful movement of resistance to foreign rule.

The career of the Congress has been one of both constructive effort for the good of the people and of unceasing struggle to gain freedom. In this struggle it had faced numerous crises and come repeatedly into direct conflict with the armed might of a great Empire. Following peaceful methods, it has not only survived these conflicts but has gained new strength from them. After the recent 3 years of an unprecedented mass upheaval and its cruel and ruthless suppression, the Congress has risen stronger than ever and become more loved by the people by whom it has stood through storm and stress.

The Congress has stood for equal rights and opportunities for every citizen of India, man or woman. It has stood for the unity of all communities and religious groups and for tolerance and goodwill between them. It has stood for full opportunities for the people as a whole to grow and develop according to their own wishes and genius ; it has also stood for the freedom of each group and territorial area within the nation to develop its own life and culture within the larger framework, and it has stated that for this purpose such territorial areas or provinces should be constituted, as far as possible, on a linguistic and cultural basis. It has stood for the rights of all those who suffer from social tyranny and injustice and for the removal for them of all barriers to equality.

The Congress has envisaged a free, democratic state with the fundamental rights and liberties of all its citizens guaranteed in the Constitution. This Constitution, in its view should be a federal one with autonomy for its constituent units, and its legislative organs elected under universal adult franchise. The federation of India must be a willing union of its various parts. In order to give the maximum of freedom to the constituent units there may be a minimum list of common and essential federal subjects which will apply to all units, and a further optional list of common subjects which may be accepted by such units as desire to do so.

Fundamental Rights

The Constitution shall provide for fundamental rights, among them the following :

1. Every citizen of India has the right of free expression of opinion, the right of free association and combination, and the right to assemble peacefully and without arms, for a purpose not opposed to law or morality.
2. Every citizen shall enjoy freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and practise his religion, subject to public order and morality.
3. The culture, language and script of the minorities and of

the different linguistic areas shall be protected.

4. All citizens are equal before the law, irrespective of religion, caste, creed or sex.
5. No disabilities attaches to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste, creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling.
6. All citizens have equal rights in regard to wells, tanks, roads, schools and places of public resort, maintained out of state or local funds, or dedicated by private persons for the use of the general public.
7. Every citizen has the right to keep and bear arms, in accordance with regulations and reservations made in that behalf.
8. No person shall be deprived of his liberty nor shall his dwelling or property be entered, sequestered, or confiscated, save in accordance with law.
9. *The state shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions.*
10. The franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage.
11. The state shall provide for free and compulsory basic education.
12. Every citizen is free to move throughout India and to stay and settle in any part thereof, to follow any trade or calling and to be treated equally with regard to legal prosecution or protection in all parts of India.

The state shall further provide all necessary safeguards for the protection and the development of the backward or suppressed elements in the population, so that they might make rapid progress and take a full and equal part in the national life. In particular, the state will help in the development of the people of the tribal areas in a manner most suited to their genius, and in the education and social and economic progress of the scheduled classes.

Content of Freedom

A hundred and fifty years and more of foreign rule have arrested the growth of the country and produced numerous vital problems that demand immediate solution. Intensive exploitation of the country and the people during this period has reduced the masses to the depth of misery and starvation. The country has not only been politically kept under subjection and humiliated, but has also suffered economic, social, cultural and spiritual degradation. During the years of wars this process of exploitation by irresponsible authority in utter disregard of Indian interests and views, and an incompetence in administration reached a new height leading to terrible famine and widespread misery. There is no way to solve any of these urgent problems except through "*independence*". The content of political freedom must be both economic and social.

The most vital and urgent of India's problems is how to remove the cause of poverty and raise the standard of the masses. It is to the well-being and progress of these masses that the Congress had directed its special attention and its constructive activities. It is by their well-being and advancement that it has judged every proposal and every change, and it has declared that anything that comes in the way of the good of the masses of our country must be removed. Industry and agriculture, the social services and public utilities, must be encouraged, modernised and rapidly extended in order to add to the wealth of the country and give it the capacity for self-growth, without dependence on others. But all this must be done with the primary object of benefiting the masses of our people and raising their economic, cultural and spiritual level, removing unemployment, and adding to the dignity of the individual.

For this purpose it will be necessary to plan and coordinate social advance in all its many fields, to prevent the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of individuals and groups, to prevent vested interests inimical to society from growing, and to have social control of the mineral resources, means of transport and the principal methods of production and distribution in land, industry and in other departments of

national activity, so that free India may develop into a co-operative Commonwealth. The State must, therefore, own or control a key and basic industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport currency and exchange, banking and insurance, must be regulated in the national interest.

Though poverty is widespread in India, it is essentially a rural problem, caused chiefly by over-pressure on land and lack of other wealth-producing occupations. India, under British rule has been progressively ruralised, many of her avenues of work and employment closed, and a vast mass of the populations thrown on the land, which has undergone continuous fragmentation, till a very large number of holdings have become uneconomic. It is essential, therefore, that the problem of the land should be dealt with in all its aspects. Agriculture has to be improved on scientific lines and industry has to be developed rapidly in its various forms—large-scale, medium and small so as not only to produce wealth, but also to absorb people from the land. In particular, cottage industries have to be encouraged both as whole-time and part-time occupations. It is essential that in planning and the development of industry, while maximum wealth production for the community should be aimed at, it should be borne in mind that this not done at the cost of creating fresh unemployment. Planning must lead to maximum employment, indeed to the employment of every able bodied person, landless labourers should have opportunities of work offered to them and be absorbed in agriculture or industry.

The reform of the land system which is so urgently needed in India involves the removal of intermediaries between the peasant and the state. The rights of such intermediaries should, therefore, be acquired on payment of equitable compensation. While individualist farming or peasant proprietorship should continue, progressive agriculture as well as the creation of new social values and incentives require some system of co-operative farming suited to Indian conditions. Any such change can, however, be made only with the goodwill and agreement of the peasantry concerned. It is desirable, therefore, that some

experimental cooperative farms should be organised with state help in various parts of India. There should also be large state farms for demonstrative and experimental purposes.

Balanced Economy

In the development of land and industry there has to be a proper integration and balance, between rural and urban economy. In the past, rural economy has suffered and the town and city have prospered at the cost of village. This has to be righted and an attempt made to equalise so far as possible, the standards of life of town dwellers and villagers. Industry should not be concentrated in particular provinces, so as to give a balanced economy to each province and it should be decentralised, as far as this is possible without sacrifice of efficiency. Both the development of land and of industry, as well as the health and well-being of the people, require the harnessing and proper utilisation of the vast energy that is represented by the great rivers of India, which is not only largely running to waste but is often the cause of great injury to the land and the people who live on it. River commissions should be constituted to undertake this task in order to promote irrigation and ensure an even and continuous supply of water, to prevent disastrous floods and soil erosion, to eradicate malaria to develop hydro-electric power, and in other ways to help in raising the general standard of life especially in the rural areas. The power resources of the country have to be developed rapidly in this and other ways in order to provide the necessary foundation for the growth of industry and agriculture.

Social Security and Services

Adequate arrangement should be made for the education of the masses with a view to raising them intellectually, economically, culturally and morally, and to fit them for the new forms of work and services which will open out before them. Public health services which are essential for the growth of the nation should be provided for on the widest scale and in this, as in

other matters, the needs of the rural areas should receive special attention. This should include special provisions for maternity and child welfare. Conditions should thus be created in which every individual has an equal opportunity for advance in every field of national activity and there is social security for all.

Science in its innumerable fields of activity has played an ever-increasing part in influencing and moulding human life and will do so in even greater measure in the future. Industrial, agricultural and cultural advance, as well as national defence, depend upon it. Scientific research is, therefore, a basic and essential activity of the state and should be organised and encouraged on the widest scale.

In regard to labour, the state shall safeguard the interests of industrial workers and shall secure for them a minimum wage and a decent standard of living, proper housing, hours of work and conditions of labour in conformity, as far as economic conditions in the country permit, with international standard, suitable machinery for the settlement of disputes between employers and workmen, and protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness and unemployment. Workers shall have the right to form unions to protect their interests.

Rural indebtedness has in the past crushed the agricultural population, and though, owing to various causes in recent years this has grown less, the burden still continues and must be removed, cheap credit must be made available through co-operatives. Cooperatives should also be organised for other purposes both in rural and urban areas. In particular, industrial cooperatives should be encouraged as being especially suited for the development of small-scale industry on a democratic basis.

Urgent Problems

While the immediate and urgent problems of India can only be effectively tackled by joint and planned attack on all fronts, political, economic, agricultural, industrial and social—certain needs are of paramount importance today. Owing to the gross

incompetence and mismanagement of the Government an incredible amount of suffering has been caused to the people of India. Millions have died of starvation, and scarcity of food and clothing is still widespread. Corruption in the services and in all matters pertaining to the supply and control of the vital necessities of life is rampant and has become intolerable. These urgent problems require immediate attention.

In International affairs the Congress stands for the establishment of a World Federation of Free Nations. Till such time as such a federation takes shape, India must develop friendly relations with all nations and particularly with her neighbours. In the Far East, in South-East Asia in Western Asia India has had trade and cultural relations for thousands of years and it is inevitable that with freedom she should renew and develop these relations. Reasons of security and future trends of trade also demand closer contacts with these regions. India, which has conducted her own struggle for freedom on a non-violent basis, will always throw her weight on the side of world peace and cooperation. She will also champion the freedom of all other subject nations because only after the elimination of Imperialism everywhere can world peace be established.

Congress Battle-Cry

On the 8th of August, 1942, the All-India Congress Committee passed a resolution, since then famous in India's story. By its demands and challenge the Congress stands today. It is on the basis of this resolution and with its battle-cry that the Congress faces the elections.

The Congress, therefore, appeals to the voters all over the country to support Congress candidates in every way at the forthcoming elections, and to stand by the Congress at this critical juncture, which is so pregnant with future possibilities. In these elections, petty issues do not count, not do individuals, nor sectarian cries—only one thing counts. The freedom and independence of our motherland, from which all other freedoms will flow to our people. Many a time the people of India have taken the pledge of independence; that pledge has yet to be

redeemed, and the well-beloved cause for which it stands and which has summoned us so often, still beckons to us. The time is coming when we shall redeem it in full. This election is a small test for us, a preparation for the greater things to come. Let all those who are and long for freedom and the independence of India meet this test with strength and confidence and march together to the free India of our dreams.

First General Elections—1952

Lok Sabha and State Assemblies

TEXT OF THE ELECTION MANIFESTO

The achievement of independence and the establishment of the Indian Republic concluded one phase of the Indian people's struggle for emancipation. The success of this phase of our struggle for freedom was unique in many respects. Under the leadership of Gandhiji the National Congress carried on this struggle and endeavoured to follow, to the best of its ability, the policy and methods which Gandhiji had laid down. In cooperation with vast numbers of the men and women of our country, it was the high privilege of the Congress to serve the cause of the country and of the masses of our people and lead them to success. The Father of the Nation told us to value the moral and ethical basis of national life and made this the condition of political action. He emphasised that means were as important as ends and the means we adopt ultimately shape the ends which follow. In accordance with India's immemorial teaching and heritage, the performance of duty was given first place, and rights and privileges naturally flowed from them. The Congress and the people could only imperfectly follow this teaching, but the inspiration they drew from it, benefited them and led them towards their goal. It is necessary for all of us to keep this in mind when conflict darkens the world and dissensions and a lowering of standards threaten our public life. It is only by adhering to these first principles that real success can be achieved and India can prosper and rise to her destined heights.

Even during our struggle for independence, its content was

not merely political freedom, but also the freedom of the masses from exploitation and want. The provision of basic material needs of food, clothing and shelter was the first essential, to be followed by the provision for cultural growth. On the attainment of independence, exceedingly difficult problems confronted the nation and even threatened the newly won freedom. During the last four years, these great problems of ensuring the freedom and integrity of the country, of integrating various parts into the Union of India, of attempting to rehabilitate millions of displaced persons, and of laying the foundations for future growth have absorbed the mind and energy of the country. The last Great War put an end in many ways to the old world that we knew and posed entirely new problems; the partition of India left a bitter legacy behind. Our civil and military services had to be organised afresh and the very large foreign element in them replaced by Indians. India's relations with her neighbour country, Pakistan, have in spite of our best efforts continued to be abnormal and have raised and are still raising difficult problems.

Because of the multitude and complexity of the problems the country has had to face since the achievement of independence, our economic progress had not been satisfactory. Millions in the country still lack sufficiency of food, clothing and shelter. The objectives of the Congress, which have been embodied in the Constitution of India, still remain, in a large measure, unrealised. The time has come for our struggle for emancipation to enter into its second phase of realising those objectives, without which political freedom can have little meaning for most of us. Economic progress must therefore be given first priority, subject only to the maintenance of the freedom and integrity of the country.

The key to the character of the future economic and social organisation of the country and its motive power is provided in the Congress Constitution, which has as its objective the establishment in India, by peaceful and legitimate means, of a Cooperative Commonwealth based on equality of opportunity and of political, economic and social rights, and aiming at world peace and fellowship. Thus the objective as well as the

method is one of cooperation and the avoidance, as far as possible, of competition and conflict. This conception of social organisation inevitably leads to the secular State in which every individual has equal rights and opportunities, and the removal of barriers which may divide the people into opposing groups on the basis of religion, caste, class or region. The application of this principle in the national sphere would lead to social progress and peace and would strengthen the nation. Its extension to the international sphere leads to an independent foreign policy basing itself on the promotion of world peace.

The progress of a country with limited resources, such as India is at present, depends on the most effective utilisation of such resources for the public good. This involves a planned approach to the various aspects of national life and activity. The Congress welcomes therefore the functioning of the Planning Commission and considers that the method of planned development is essential for progress and must be continued. But such planning, in order to be effective, must have full support and cooperation from the public. Planning must include all aspects of our national life so that progress may be uniform and might not be held up by some backward sector. In India today, stress must inevitably be laid on the progress of the rural areas and the people who live there. Not only do they contain the vast majority of our population and are the basis of our economy, but they have suffered neglect in the past and this must be made good so that they might have full opportunities for economic and cultural advance and to live the good life which is our aim. The first and vital step has been or is being taken to free the land from the burden of old and out-dated agrarian systems of tenure. The abolition of *Zamindari*, *Jagirdari* and the like must be rapidly completed. Security of tenure and fair rents should be assured to tenants and tillers of the soil.

Increased agricultural production is absolutely essential for putting our national economy on a firm basis. Small and un-economic holdings stand in the way of rapid advance in agricultural production. The line of advance should therefore be cooperative farming with the objective of making the whole or a greater part of a village, a unit of cooperative management.

The conditions of agricultural labour should be improved, especially in the lower wage pockets. Opportunities for work and employment in small scale and cottage industries should be afforded to them. They should be given preference in allotment of land in newly reclaimed areas, which should be worked on cooperative lines. Facilities should be given to them in regard to housing sites.

The preservation of milk and draught cattle and upgrading of cattle breeds are important for increasing the supply of milk and improvement of agriculture. Increasing attention will have to be paid to this.

The burden on the land of too many people subsisting on it has to be reduced by the diversion of part of this population to other vocations. Some of these can be absorbed in large industries but, in the main, scope for absorption will come through small scale and cottage industries. These cottage industries are particularly important in India and must be developed and protected with the aid of the state and coordinated with other forms of industry. But it must always be borne in mind that the best techniques should be employed for small scale and cottage industries in order to make them effective and economic. For this purpose the state should encourage research. Cottage industries should be organised in industrial cooperatives, wherever possible. The main field of employment for the educated youth has to be found in well-organised and properly conducted industries. The handloom industry is our major cottage industry and deserves every help from Government. It has suffered from lack of yarn and because of this many handloom weavers have been unemployed or only partly employed. Government should make special arrangements for the supply of adequate quantities of yarn to them.

It is not possible to pursue a policy of *laissez-faire* in industry. This has been rejected in most countries and is peculiarly unsuited to present-day conditions in India. It is incompatible with any planning. It has long been the Congress policy that basic industries should be owned or controlled by the state. This policy holds and must be progressively given effect to. State trading should be undertaken wherever the balance of

advantage lies in favour of such a course. A large field for private enterprise is, however, left over. In this field the aim should be to develop cooperative enterprise on an increasing scale. Thus, our economy will have a public sector as well as private sector. But the private sector must accept the objectives of the National Plan and fit into it. The progressive extension of the public sector in the field of what is now the private sector must depend on various factors, including the results achieved, the resources available and the capacity of the country at the moment. The test should always be what serves the social ends in view. No vested interest or inherited privilege should be allowed to come in the way of the country's economic progress, nor should we allow ourselves to be distracted by slogans and doctrines which sound attractive, but which might lead to a worsening of the condition of our people.

The general objective of economic progress has to be translated into concrete programmes in close relation to the needs of the people and the available means and resources. The first consideration must always be to avoid a breakdown on any point in respect of whatever is essential for the life of the community. This necessitates a system of controlled distribution in regard to commodities which are in short supply. It is also of the highest importance to keep prices from rising and to endeavour to reduce them. Many of our difficulties today are due to a high and rising price level and economic development has been seriously hampered because of this. If prices rise, this will not only come in the way of all progress, but will even prove detrimental to the real interests of those very sections of our people for whose supposed benefit an increase in prices is sometimes advocated. Therefore, it is of essential importance to follow firmly a price policy aiming at first, a prevention of a further rise and secondly, to reduce present prices. Steps must be taken to maintain a fair and proper structure of relative prices as between agricultural commodities *inter-se*, and between them and manufactured articles.

If prices have to be held and reduced, some measure of controlled distribution becomes essential. In the matter of food, the fate of millions of people is bound up with the presence of

a nation-wide system of controls. But for these controls, the threat of famine might have materialised in different parts of the country. We must endeavour to create conditions of relative abundance of articles which are necessary for the masses. As this happens, these controls can be progressively dispensed with. But till we have an adequate supply, we must cooperate to make the control function more effectively. Hesitancy and opposition to control themselves produce weakness in their working. It is true that controls have led to corruption. The way to deal with this is to make the controls effective and to improve their administration.

Considerable progress has been made in the development of scientific research and the application of science to industry. This must be continued and adequate provision made for technical education. Priority has been given and must continue to be given to river valley schemes which are basic for the development of agriculture and power supply. In regard to heavy industry, priority should be given to those industries which are considered of basic importance, such as steel, heavy chemicals, fertilisers and machine tools.

Any all-round development of the country on a significant scale must strain its resources to the utmost, necessitating the need for much larger savings on the part of the community. In order to build a better future we must be prepared to suffer hardships in the present. The necessary sacrifice in consumption has to be spread as widely as possible, but those with higher incomes have special obligations to fulfil in this respect. Corporate savings should play an increasing role in capital formation. Steps have already been made in several states to utilise the voluntary effort of the people for constructive purposes and these have met with considerable success. A planned effort should be made to canalise, in an organised way, the unused time, skill and other resources of the people on a voluntary basis for the economic and social betterment of the community.

The achievement of economic equality and social justice must proceed side by side with economic progress. Thus alone can social peace and democracy be preserved. The post-war

shift in relative prices has, to some extent, rectified the disparity between the rural and the urban sectors. The measures for economic development being undertaken by the state, particularly the large irrigation and power projects and the programmes for agricultural improvement, will lead to a further leveling up of the standard of living of the masses, especially in the rural areas. Between the upper and the lower ranges of fixed incomes, the gap has been narrowed in terms of the standard of living. Much more remains to be done. Redirection of public expenditure in the interests of social welfare and the imposition of estate duties on succession should be fully availed of as a means for the removal of inequalities. The tax structure should be examined and other methods explored for bringing about a reasonable relationship between the minimum and the maximum incomes, both in the private and the public sectors, in keeping with economic conditions of the country. *Inequalities have been accentuated during recent years largely in consequence of illegitimate gains from black marketing, tax evasion, certain forms of speculation and other anti-social activities.* To give immediate relief to the people and to promote social justice, these evils should be curbed with a strong hand. There has been uneven economic development in various regions in the country. In our further programmes for development of irrigation, power, agriculture and industry, the claims of these regions should be given special consideration.

The concern of the state for safeguarding the rights and interests of labour has expressed itself in several advanced measures of legislation. There is, however, much room for improving the implementation of these laws. Housing for workers is of great importance and should be encouraged by the state to the best of its ability and resources, in cooperation with the employers and the workers. A rise in the standard of living of the workers is not only desirable in itself, but leads to greater productivity. The per capita productivity in India, when compared to some other countries, is low. This may be due to a variety of causes which must be investigated. It must be borne in mind, however, that without higher productivity the interests of the nation as well as of the workers must suffer. The

machinery and procedure relating to arbitration and adjudication of disputes should be so improved as to secure fair settlements, based on the principle of social justice and with the least expenditure of time and money. Legal technicalities, formalities and appeals should be reduced to the minimum.

Considerable improvement has been made in our railway services. The Chittaranjan Locomotive Works have been established as a state enterprise for the production of locomotives. The Hindustan Aircraft Ltd. are also producing railway carriages. The objective is to move towards self-sufficiency ; progress is being made in this direction, though it will necessarily take time. A continuous attempt has to be made to bring about further improvements in administration and for the convenience of passengers, more especially those travelling in the lower classes.

In some states, transport services have been nationalised resulting in greater efficiency and convenience to the public. This policy should be continued.

The public services and methods of recruitment have to be conditioned and adapted for the purposes of the National Plan. Special training should be given, where necessary, for the purposes of the nationalised or public sector of our economy. It is essential that high moral standards should be maintained in our public work and while good work should receive commendation, bad work should be condemned. An effective machinery for this should be devised.

There has been frequent reference to corruption and there is little doubt that various forms of corruption exist as social evils today. Every effort must be made to put an end to this evil and some form of summary method must be devised to deal with such cases. At present the real difficulty in dealing with these matters is due to the dilatoriness of procedure in departmental inquiries and judicial proceedings in the law courts, and the standard of *formal proof required*, which often leads to the guilty escaping punishment.

The importance of education and public health is well recognised and yet no marked advance can be made in them so long as our resources are limited. At the same time, it is

necessary to direct education in the right channels and remove many of the evils from which it suffers today. Education should be looked upon as something which trains the intellect and builds the character of the student, and not merely as a means for employment. What the next generation will be depends upon the education given now and the importance of this cannot, therefore, be exaggerated. Our system of education should not be divorced from the productive and other needs of the community, but should be related to them and be conducive to their fulfilment. The principles of basic education, i.e., learning through a craft, should be utilised to the largest possible extent. Even in higher education, some form of manual work should form an essential part of the curriculum, without which degrees or diplomas should not be given. An essential part of education should be an appreciation of and devotion to Truth and Beauty in their various forms. Art and literature, music and drama, singing and dancing should be encouraged.

In regard to public health, considerable progress has been made in the control of epidemic diseases and provision of improved water supply and general sanitation. The control of malaria has been effective in certain areas and has resulted in freeing these areas for intensive cultivation. Both from the point of view of public health and of production, malaria control is important and should be encouraged. A significant indication of the improvement in public health is the considerable fall in the death rate and a higher expectation of life.

The Constitution has laid a special duty on Government to bring about the economic and cultural advancement of scheduled castes and tribes and other backward classes. Both the Central and State Governments have given particular attention to this important matter. The Congress, under Gandhiji's lead, has always made this social uplift of these backward classes as one of its principal planks and has laboured to this end with considerable success. This work must continue until these classes enjoy the same economic and educational opportunities and advantages as others. In particular, the tribal people have to be helped to develop according to their own genius.

Owing to certain historical and administrative necessities of the moment, certain states in India were classified as Part B and Part C states. This classification was transitional and cannot be considered to be permanent. It has to be remembered that certain parts of India have developed differently during past years. Certain border areas, as well as certain areas inhabited by tribal people, require special treatment. The general policy in regard to Part B and C states should be to speed up the removal of differential treatment as rapidly as possible. The chief difficulty in regard to these states has been the lack of a legislature in most of them. As soon as properly constituted legislatures come into existence, the differences between them and Part A states will largely disappear. Where such legislatures and ministers exist, there is no longer any reason for any differentiation to continue, except to the extent that there are certain covenants which have to be honoured. In regard to some of the small Part C states, the question of merger into a large unit should be considered.

One of the major problems before us during the last four years, which has demanded and must continue to demand priority and full attention is that of the rehabilitation of the displaced persons from Pakistan. According to the figures of the last census, forty-nine lakhs came from Western Pakistan and about 26 lakhs from Eastern Pakistan. Of those coming from Western Pakistan, about 29 lakhs came from rural areas. Land owners and cultivators from the West Punjab and displaced agriculturists from the rest of West Pakistan who were desirous to do cultivation here, have been settled on land except those who preferred urban occupation. The latter are estimated to number 7 lakhs. Of the 27 lakh urban people from West Pakistan, it is estimated that nearly 13 lakhs have been rehabilitated either by finding gainful employment in Government or other services or by being given vocational or technical training. In addition, 9,63,000 persons (including dependents) have been provided with means of livelihood through grant of loans and maintenance allowances, allotment of shops and industrial concerns and admission to Homes and training centres. Of the remaining nearly 4½ lakhs of urban displaced persons,

the majority did not require or ask for governmental assistance.

The problem of displaced persons from Eastern Pakistan became serious early in 1950 and rehabilitation schemes were drawn up. The position was rather fluid as large numbers of migrants returned to their homes. Of the 26 lakhs that remained nearly two-thirds have been rehabilitated or have received governmental assistance in rehabilitation. During the last few weeks a new problem has arisen in West Bengal, where a continuous stream of migrants from East Pakistan is flowing in. Every effort is being made to deal with this abnormal and disturbing situation.

By the end of the current financial year, the Central Government will have spent about Rs. 143 crores on relief and rehabilitation of displaced persons from Western and Eastern Pakistan. In addition, about 56 lakh acres of evacuee and other land have been given to them, and about 3,32,000 urban houses, shops and industrial premises have been provided. Of these 96,000 are new houses constructed by Government. Further 52,000 developed plots have been allotted to DPs for constructing houses. The question of properties left by displaced persons in Pakistan has remained unsettled in spite of repeated efforts of Government. This is a vital matter affecting millions of people, which should be settled as early as possible.

In East Punjab, Delhi, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Bombay and in some other parts of the country, many new townships and colonies for displaced persons have been built up. Some of these are models of their kind and are conducted on cooperative lines, and are engaged in productive activities which are very satisfactory. It may be said that the results obtained in our rehabilitation work for displaced persons are remarkable. During the last 20 years or so, the problem of displaced persons has been faced in various part of Europe and Asia. The results we have obtained in our work compare very favourably with the results elsewhere. The fact remains, however, that a large number of displaced persons have to be provided for and more especially in West Bengal, where the problem at present is a growing one. High priority must neces-

sarily continue to be given to this rehabilitation work for displaced persons both from Western and Eastern Pakistan.

As India is a secular State, every citizen has the same duties, rights, privileges and obligations as any other. He has full freedom to profess and practise his religion. It is the particular duty of the State to protect these rights of all minority communities in the country and to give them full opportunities for development, so that they might play their part in the economy and public life of the country. The Congress will make every effort to ensure proper representation for them in the legislatures and other public bodies.

The women of India in the past, and especially in the struggle for the country's freedom, have played a notable part and distinguished themselves in many ways. They suffer, however, from a number of social and other disabilities. It is important that these disabilities should be removed so that they may take their full part in the economy and social progress of the country and make their special contribution to the life of the family and the community. In particular, they have to be intimately connected with all activities of social welfare and social education. Women are even more responsible than men for the next generation and unless they are enabled to participate fully in all national activities, the progress of the nation suffers. The Congress is, therefore of opinion that every effort should be made to open out opportunities of service for them in the legislatures and in social activities.

A demand for re-distribution of provinces on a linguistic basis has been persistently made in the south and west of India. The Congress expressed itself in favour of linguistic provinces many years ago. A decision on this question ultimately depends upon the wishes of the people concerned. While linguistic reasons have undoubtedly a certain cultural and other importance, there are other factors also such as economic, administrative and financial, which have to be taken into consideration. Where such a demand represents the agreed views of the people concerned, the necessary steps prescribed by the Constitution, including the appointment of a Boundary Commission, should be taken.

In regard to foreign policy, India has pursued an independent line in her own national interest and in the interest of world peace, and has sought to maintain friendly relations with all countries. This has been a positive policy and, though sometimes criticised by others, have been vindicated by subsequent developments. This policy, which has borne some fruit already, will, no doubt, yield further results and should be pursued. Certain small foreign establishments continue in India. The Congress has declared that these must revert to India, and our policy must be so aimed as to bring this about by peaceful means.

India's policy with our neighbour countries has been very friendly, and we have welcomed the recent developments in Nepal. Unfortunately, we cannot say this in regard to Pakistan, with which our relations have been full of difficulty. We have repeatedly endeavoured to find a solution of the many issues on which we are at variance, but without success. The chief among these issues is that of Kashmir. In spite of the aggression of Pakistan and the continuous provocative propaganda there, we have endeavoured to find a peaceful settlement in accordance with the wishes of the people of Jammu and Kashmir state. That policy holds and we cannot permit the Kashmir state to be disposed of in any other way. We owe a duty to the people of the state as well as to ourselves and we have to discharge it fully.

The world is distraught and moves from one crisis to another. India is affected by these world crisis and cannot escape their consequences. We live in dangerous times and a false step may well prove perilous to us. India can only play an effective part in the cause of peace in this tormented world by adhering to her ideals and building up her strength as a united nation. Separatist and fissiparous tendencies weaken the nation and make it ineffective and, at the same time, come in the way of all progress. These difficult and precarious times demand a large unity of purpose and endeavour and cooperation in achieving the objectives we have placed before ourselves.

Second General Elections—1957

Lok Sabha and State Assemblies

TEXT OF THE ELECTION MANIFESTO

Seventyone years ago, the Indian National Congress was born. Its early beginnings were small but significant. This infant organisation was to grow into a mighty organ of the Indian people representing their wishes and urges for freedom. Year by year it grew in scope and outlook, and great men and women, famous in India's story, took part in moulding it so that it might play its destined part to bring independence to this country. Dadabhai Naoroji first enunciated the goal of Swaraj; Lokamanya Tilak broadened the base of the Congress and gave it strength and drive; Mahatma Gandhi made it the representative of the vast masses of India and endowed it with faith and self-reliance. Under his leadership it chalked out a new path of peaceful revolutionary action based on the high principles for which he stood. Hundreds of thousands of our countrymen followed that path willingly and sacrificed everything that they had in the pursuit of freedom for their beloved country. Gradually also, the Congress developed a social content for that freedom and stood ever more for the advancement of the dispossessed and the unprivileged and those who had to suffer political, economic and social disabilities.

Decade after decade, this peaceful and revolutionary struggle continued in India, often convulsing the life of the country and drawing into its fold millions of our people. At the end of 1929, the Lahore Congress defined Swaraj as full independence, and on the 26th January 1930, people all over the country took this pledge. At last, on the 15th August 1947, freedom came,

and the pledge that millions in India had taken year after year was redeemed and largely fulfilled. At that solemn and historic moment, when India stepped out from servitude to freedom, we took another pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity.

Immediately, the sun of freedom was darkened by conflict and disaster and, soon after, the Master, who had led us from darkness to light, passed away making the ultimate sacrifice for the cause he held dear. Sorrow overwhelmed us, but his voice rang in our ears and his message gave us strength. We laboured to face this challenge to our newly won freedom and people of India defeated the forces of darkness and reaction.

The partition of India resulted in the uprooting of millions of people. Vast migrations took place, and the problem of rehabilitation assumed colossal proportions. This problem was also faced with determination, and millions of displaced persons were rehabilitated and given new hope for the future. The success attending these efforts has been one of the most remarkable features of the past nine years. Although the problem of dispossessed persons from Western Pakistan was largely solved, unfortunately, migrations continued from Pakistan and still take place in large numbers affecting the whole of India and, more especially, the State of West Bengal. Every effort has been made, and will continue to be made, to help these people, who have had to leave home and hearth and have to begin a new life.

The numerous princely States of India were absorbed and integrated into the Union of India. This remarkable achievement within a short period of time, did credit to the Government of India and to the rulers of the States concerned. Similar problems in other countries had led to violent struggles and major conflicts. Here, in India, according to our way, we solved it peacefully and cooperatively, thus laying the foundations of an integrated India.

The new Constitution of India took shape after much labour, and in 1950, on the 26th of January, a date hallowed in our long struggle for freedom, the Republic of India came into existence. Thus, the old pledge was fully redeemed and a

new chapter began in India's long story.

The Congress had fulfilled its old pledge for independence; but the other pledge to fight poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity remained, and the Congress set itself to this tremendous task. Seven years have passed since then and the story of these seven years of work and achievement is before our people and the world. Whether in the field of international affairs or of our national and domestic problems, India's star has grown brighter and her achievements have been notable. Keeping faith with the old, we have sought to build up a new India, a modern State which would remove the burdens of those who suffer and give opportunity for progress to all. The great adventure on which we embarked involves a long and arduous journey and we can only progress step by step along that path. We have far to go before we reach the end of this journey. But we have made good progress and laid the foundations of the new India of our dreams.

The Congress, throughout the struggle for India's freedom, had always stood for the betterment of the masses and the underprivileged. A precise direction was given to this objective by the famous Avadi Resolution of the Congress laying down as its objective a socialist pattern of society for the country. While we aimed at socialism, we also adhered to a democratic structure of society and we proclaimed afresh that our means would be peaceful. Thus the Congress stood for democracy and socialism and for peaceful and legitimate methods. These are the basic policies of the Congress on which we have laboured to build the noble edifice of new India.

A planned approach to the problems of India was made and, as a first effort, the Five-Year Plan took shape. Most of the targets laid down in this Plan were fulfilled, and some of the achievements exceeded the expectations indicated in the targets. The Zamindari and Jagirdari systems were largely abolished. Production in food and other articles was considerably increased. Science, the basis of modern life, was nurtured, and great laboratories and institutes grew up all over the country. Vast river valley schemes—Bhakra-Nangal, Damodar Valley, Hirakud, Tungabhadra and others—made substantial progress,

leading to the spread of irrigation and the production of electric power. Many industrial plants came into existence, more particularly, the great fertiliser factory at Sindri and the Chittaranjan Locomotive Factory. A beginning was made in the scheme of community development in the rural areas, which was of revolutionary significance and which was to spread far into the villages of India. Above all, self-reliance and a new confidence were created in the people of India.

In 1951-52 the first general elections under the new Constitution of India took place all over the country. Never before, anywhere in the world, had democratic elections taken place on such a vast scale. Every adult man and woman in a population of three hundred and sixty millions was entitled to vote and a very large number of them participated in the elections. Every group and party and individual, whatever his political or economic programme or ideology, had the right to participate in the elections. These free and impartial elections resulted in a great victory for the Congress. At the same time, other parties were also represented in Parliament and in the new legislatures that came into existence in the States. Through these elections the people of the country proclaimed afresh their faith in the Congress and gave it strength. The country gained stability and confidence to plan for the future.

At the conclusion of the first Five-Year Plan in March 1956, the second Plan came into being. In this Plan, emphasis was laid on a more rapid development of industry and at the same time, the importance of greater production in agriculture was pointed out. In order to facilitate the rapid industrialisation of India, the production of steel was given first importance, and three large new iron and steel plants are being erected, in addition to the expansion of the old plants. Machine-making industry also finds an important place in the Plan. Organised attempts are being made to exploit the mineral resources of the country, especially oil and coal. The chemical industry is being developed, and considerable progress has been made in atomic energy research for the production of atomic power for industrial development. Ship-building is being increased, and aircraft production is being organised. Transport and Railways form

an essential part of the Plan. An integral coach factory of the latest type has been established in Madras. The rural community development schemes, it is hoped, will cover the whole of rural India by the end of the Second Plan period. It is not possible to enumerate all that is being done and that is envisaged to be done during the Second Five-Year Plan in this manifesto. The Plan itself is before the public and lays down in detail the innumerable activities that are being undertaken in the country.

These numerous activities are not confined to the economic sphere, but include also social and cultural activities. Legislation has been passed for the reform of the Hindu Law in regard to marriage and divorce and inheritance by women. Thus, out-of-date customs which bore down upon our womenfolk have been ended, and in this and other ways a larger freedom has been ensured to the women of India.

No subject was dearer to Gandhiji than the removal of untouchability and the uplift of those classes who had been suppressed by social custom and practice. The Congress made this cause of the Harijans its own and laboured for them throughout the period of our national struggle. By our Constitution and the legislation passed thereafter the practice of untouchability was made an offence and a great and essential reform affecting millions of our countrymen took place.

India is a country of great variety not only in climate and physical features, but in the ways of living of her people. It is these manifold aspects, linked together by a basic unity, which give beauty and richness to her culture. The tribal people of India are an essential and important part of the country. They vary greatly among themselves. But, all of them are noted for their vigorous life, their artistry and their folk songs and dances. The Constitution has made special provision for them, so that they may progress according to their own genius and ways of life. It has been a misfortune that some people living in the Naga Hills have taken to violence. The Nagas are a brave people, who are a credit to India. They have every right to preserve their own customs and ways of life in their own way and to enjoy a measure of autonomy for this purpose. It is hoped

that the misunderstandings and apprehensions that have misled them, will be removed, and they will become free and contented members of the large family of India.

A significant development has been the growth in the cultural field, in literature, art and music, song and dance. This indicates the new life and creative urges that are pulsing through the nation.

During the past year or more, the question of the reorganisation of the States gave rise to much controversy and even conflicts. Such questions, involving languages and a new distribution of provincial areas, have often roused strong passions in other countries also. But, after full discussions and consultation, the States were reorganised and a new map of India took shape. In spite of the strong feelings which these changes had aroused, the people of India showed their basic resilience and vitality and their capacity for peaceful adjustment, even when they disagreed. It is this capacity which gives strength to our people and the hope that, however much there might be occasional disagreements, unity prevails and good sense re-asserts itself.

Recent amendments to the Constitution have ensured the protection of every language, even where it is the language of a minority community. Minorities in India, whether religious or linguistic or other, must have the assurance and the feeling of playing their full part in the varied activities of the country. The Constitution of India is a secular one, but it respects all religions prevalent in India and gives full scope for their functioning. Every attempt must be made to ensure that these assurances are carried out and no minority is made to suffer because it is either a religious or linguistic minority. Secularism does not mean lack of faith but protection of all faiths and the encouragement of spiritual and moral values.

The political revolution was largely completed on the establishment of the Republic of India. But, full achievement can only come when there is a real emotional integration of the people of India. To that end, efforts will continue to be directed, so that the feeling of separateness, whether communal or provincial or due to caste distinctions, is ended. We realise fully the

dangers of communalism and have struggled against them throughout Congress history. The recent past has demonstrated that the feeling of provincial separateness is still strong and has to be combated. Caste is an evil which has weakened our society, introduced innumerable fissiparous tendencies and resulted in the suppression and humiliation of large numbers of people. The Congress is entirely opposed to this system, as it is opposed to everything that creates divisions and inequality.

The resolution in India can only be completed when the political revolution is followed by an economic as well as a social revolution. These two latter are gradually taking shape in India. But, according to India's own genius and method, they take place peacefully and cooperatively. Considerable progress has been made and changes will continue, so that ultimately we can establish a full socialist order of society giving freedom, welcome and equality of opportunity to all.

The basic objectives of the Congress, it must be repeated, are democracy and socialism and the methods have to be peaceful. We have to adhere to peaceful methods not only because they are in tune with India's thinking, from the time of our ancient sages and Ashoka to Gandhi, but also because only thus can we maintain the unity and integrity of India, and not waste our substance in internecine conflicts. Only thus can we achieve socialism through the democratic method, which we value as ensuring the freedom of the individual.

The Congress, throughout its long history, has represented political, economic and social advance. It has represented something more, which is vital to our growth. Gandhiji impressed upon the Congress and our people, the importance of moral values and of the maintenance of high standards in public as well as in private life. It is of the utmost importance that these standards and values should be maintained, more especially during a period of transition in India and the world, when values change and many old standards appear to have less significance. The story of man from his early beginnings at the dawn of history, is not merely a story of economic and technological advance but is essentially an advance on the moral, ethical and cultural plane. Without that foundation, advance in other

fields may lead, and has indeed often led, to conflict and disaster. Scientific and technological growth, bringing in its train the atomic and the hydrogen bomb and astonishing growth in means of communications, has made the moral and ethical approach of vital significance today, if human life is to survive in any civilised form.

Socialism does not merely signify changes in the economic relations of human beings. It involves fundamental changes in the social structure, in ways of thinking and in ways of living. Caste and class have no place in the socialist order that is envisaged by the Congress. It is important, therefore, that these new ways of thinking and of living should be encouraged, and old ideas about privilege on the basis of birth or caste or class or money or the hierarchy of office, should be discarded. Men should be judged by their labour, their productive and creative efforts and their services to society and humanity. The dignity of labour should be recognised, as well as the dignity of the individual in every grade of life. The socialist order is a way of life based on the people and not merely on the effort of Government. It is in the measure that the people develop their strength, their discipline, their capacity to work and their co-operative activities that socialism comes into being. Governments derive power from the people and reflect that power as well as the other urges of the people.

In economic relations there should be no exploitation and no monopolies, and disparities in income should be progressively lessened. A national minimum in the general standard of living should be aimed at, so that everyone has the necessities of life and the opportunity for education, for maintaining his health and for productive work.

Even as there are disparities among people, there are disparities in the development of different parts of the country and some areas are more developed than others. It is necessary that these backward areas and regions should be particularly helped to develop themselves, so that there is balanced growth of the country as a whole.

Many years ago, the Congress stated its objective in Article I of its Constitution, and declared it to be "the well being

and advancement of the people of India and the establishment in India by peaceful and legitimate means of a Cooperative Commonwealth based on equality of opportunity and of political, economic and social rights and aiming at world peace and fellowship". Since then, the Congress has stated that it aims at a specialist pattern of society and, thus, the object becomes the establishment of a "Socialist Cooperative Commonwealth." Cooperation is the law of life in human communities, and it is in the measure that there is lack of cooperation that troubles and conflicts arise. Therefore, the cooperative element should enter into every aspect of life and, more particularly, in industry and agriculture. In industry, the cooperative principle should lead to industrial democracy with the progressive participation of workers in industry ; in rural areas the community should be based on cooperative management of villages.

This task is a tremendous one, for it involves the raising of nearly four hundred millions to freedom and prosperity and equality. It can only be accomplished by a mighty cooperation effort of the people all over the country. In an underdeveloped country the task of taking the people out of the morass of poverty and establishing a progressive economy is peculiarly difficult. It requires a combined and persistent effort for a considerable period and a measure of austerity and avoidance of all waste so that the maximum use can be made of the nation's resources in productive channels. False standards of living and display have to be given up and those who lead the people in various parts of the country have to set an example. The process of building up a new India involves industrialisation on a large scale and improved methods of agriculture. It involves saving and investment for future progress. We have to work hard today to ensure our tomorrows.

The Second Five-Year Plan was prepared after full consultation and discussion. It represents therefore the combined wisdom of the country and it has to be given effect to by the joint effort of all our people. This Plan represents broadly the approach to the problems of India in the various fields of national activity. It is a flexible Plan and it will have to be adjusted.

from time to time as circumstances demand and as the resources of the country permit. Already certain important changes are being made in regard to resources and the target for good production as well as other matters. The experience of other countries have shown how difficult it is to keep a proper balance between industry and agriculture and between heavy, light and small-scale industries. We have to profit by this experience and aim at a balanced and, at the same time, rapid growth. The growth of heavy industry is essential if we are to industrialise our country and not be dependent on others. But *this has to be balanced by small-scale and cottage industries.* A large measure of centralisation has become inevitable in modern life. But we have also at the same time to decentralise in so far as this is possible.

The major problem of India is to fight poverty and unemployment and to raise the standards of our people. All planning has this for its objective. This necessitates greatly increased production and equitable distribution. Production in the world has grown rapidly ever since higher techniques were employed. Such higher techniques must, therefore, be encouraged in industry and agriculture, as without them production will continue to be at a low level. In introducing higher techniques, however, the human element, the utilisation of India's abundant man-power, and the question of employment must always be kept in view, so that any change-over in methods of production does not lead to unemployment and unhappiness.

The pace of progress depends upon the resources that are available or that can be raised. While help from any friendly source must be welcomed, the principal burden of finding resources must inevitably fall on the people of the country. This burden has to be borne. But, it should be spread out in such a way as to fall chiefly on those who are in a better position to shoulder it. The structure of taxation is being reconstructed with this object in view. This process will also help in reducing disparities in income and wealth.

The Congress welcomes the nationalisation of the State Bank as well as of life insurance. This is another step towards a socialist pattern and it gives a greater measure of strategic

control for planning and other purposes of the State. The resolution on industrial policy of the Government of India defines the areas reserved for the public and private sectors. It is not intended to nationalise the existing private industries, except where such is considered necessary in terms of planning or where they occupy a strategic position in the economy of the country. Private enterprise will be encouraged, but always in the context of the Plan.

It is of the highest importance to keep prices at reasonable levels and to prevent inflation. To some extent inflation is almost inevitable in a developing economy, but this should be kept fully in check and all necessary steps should be taken to that end.

In order to add to the resources of the country and also to check inflation, saving is of great importance. The Congress, therefore, commends to the people that every effort should be made to save and to invest in the various saving schemes or in productive enterprises.

On the land, all intermediaries must be progressively removed, so that land is owned by the cultivator himself. The principle of ceilings on land has been accepted and should be progressively introduced, so as to bring about a better distribution of land. Mechanised agriculture may be useful in some areas, but, in view of the man-power available and often not fully used, it is desirable to encourage intensified methods of cultivation on a cooperative basis. It is of the highest importance from every point of view that production should increase. This is the surest way of adding to the country's resources and of combating inflation. The recent World Bank Mission has stated:

"Proper application of known techniques, in conjunction with the possible expansion of irrigation and the cultivated areas, could increase India's agricultural output four or five fold. By the time that has been achieved, new techniques will have been evolved, and the way will be open for further progress. Results of the crop competitions organised for the Grow More Food Campaign show yields about

seven times higher than the local average. India's yields are at present among the lowest in the world ; with the labour force available, they could be among the highest. There is thus a great deal of scope for progress that is technically easy but is retarded by poverty and ignorance."

The Planning Commission has increased the target of additional food production during the Plan period to about 30 per cent. In view of the remarks of the World Bank Mission, this is a modest estimate. It is essential that this target should be achieved.

For this purpose, various steps have already been taken to add to our irrigation by a large number of minor works, by the construction of field embankments and contour bunds, by soil conservation, and by the introduction of dry farming methods in the semi arid regions of Bombay, Madras, Hyderabad and Uttar Pradesh. But, the greatest need of all is to have comprehensive village planning and the organisation of the cooperative movement for agricultural production. The Panchayats have an important role to play in this planning. Agricultural cooperatives should have a popular basis at the village level. Cooperation is essentially a voluntary effort and without the active participation of the people, no amount of Governmental direction yield adequate results. There may be larger cooperatives where necessary, but normally the size of a primary cooperative society should not be so large that its members do not have the sense of mutual obligation. Cooperation, therefore, has to be developed as a popular movement with the help and guidance of the State. This is not only necessary for the purposes of higher production, but also in order to develop that way of life which is based on individual freedom as well as cooperative effort.

The Community Projects and the National Extension Service are bringing about a revolutionary change in the countryside and developing a spirit of self-reliance and joint endeavour in our village people. The old static Indian village is changing and yielding place to one of a more dynamic conception. These community schemes must always keep in view the

necessity of bringing this psychological change among the people. Their primary objective must now be greater food production and the growth of small-scale and village industries.

With the advance in agriculture and the growth of small-scale and village industries, the disparity that exists today between village and town should be progressively lessened. Local initiative in the villages should be encouraged, local resources utilised and higher techniques introduced.

Landless labour constitutes an important element in the rural population of the country, and effective action should be taken to improve its economic position and social status. To this end there should be expansion of work opportunities, fixation of minimum wages, allotment of house sites and resettlement schemes.

Unemployment is not only bad for the individual concerned but is a disorder injurious to social health. Planning has, therefore, to aim at the progressive lessening of unemployment and its final elimination. This will chiefly take place by the growth of industry and, more especially, small-scale and village industries. Higher techniques appear to increase unemployment, but ultimately lead to far greater employment. Our youth should be trained especially from the point of view of fitting them into the scheme of the Plan and being utilised for greater production in land and small and cottage industries. With a view to introduce higher techniques in agriculture and to help production, trained cadres for agricultural work should be organised.

Every kind of progress in industry, agriculture or any other activity requires training and education. In spite of the existing unemployment, the question of the lack of trained manpower is already coming in the way of advance and is likely to prove a great hindrance in the future unless adequate steps are taken from now onwards. It is therefore necessary for training and education to be organised systematically so as to help in fulfilling the purposes of the Plan. Education must help in introducing new social values. The system of Basic Education is especially suited to give a new direction to primary and secondary education. It would be desirable if some

kind of labour was made an essential feature of education. More particularly, there should be some labour contribution before degrees or diplomas are given.

At present, there are large numbers of unemployed among those who have received some education. This unemployment is partly due to their not having received the proper type of education which would fit them into the nation's activities to-day. Apart from absorbing them in such vocations as may be suitable, an attempt should be made to give them some additional technical or specialised training so as to enable them to find suitable work more easily. The Second Five-Year Plan has made provision for a number of schemes for reducing unemployment among the educated classes. Among these is the establishment of industrial estates.

Special attention to public health is necessary in order to raise the standard of the people. This requires not only governmental action but also changes in some of the habits of the people. A cooperative approach to this problem will prove more effective both for the individual and the community.

The administrative machinery should be adopted to suit the purposes of the Plan. Cumbersome procedures and red-tape should be avoided and it should be so organised that rapid decisions are taken and given effect to. In particular, it should not isolate itself from the people but function in cooperation with them. The administration of justice should be simplified and made less expensive.

Prohibition has long been the Congress policy and has been introduced in some parts of the country. Progressive steps should be taken to introduce it in other parts.

All these activities in industry and agriculture or in social services require combined effort in peaceful conditions. If the attention of the people is diverted into wasteful channels or conflict, then the nation suffers and the rate of our progress is slowed down. It is necessary, therefore, to have industrial peace as well as peace in our educational establishments which are training people to shoulder the burdens of the nation. Strikes and lock-outs are peculiarly harmful when the main purpose is to add to production. Where any problems or controversies

arise, they should be solved by peaceful and cooperative methods without stopping or slowing down the great machine of production which is so essential to the march of the nation to the next great stage in its journey to a socialist commonwealth.

The political integration of India has been completed except for a very small part of territory on the western coast—Goa. The other enclaves of foreign territory which were governed by France, have been incorporated into India by a friendly settlement with France. But Goa still remains, a symbol of the worst type of colonial rule and degradation, and the Portuguese Government have resisted all attempts at a peaceful settlement of this problem. Hundreds of Indian patriots and many thousands of Goans have suffered and are suffering in Goa because they laboured for freedom and for integration with India. It is impossible for India to tolerate a colonial enclave in any part of its territory and the continuation of it is an affront to the people of India. Nevertheless, attempts to solve this have been peaceful and will continue to be peaceful. These attempts must and will succeed.

India desires no expansion and makes no claim on any territory outside her borders. She wishes to live at peace with her neighbours as with other countries. It was with regret, and under the compulsion of circumstances, that Partition was agreed to and it brought much distress and suffering to the people of India and Pakistan. India has fully accepted that partition and the independent State of Pakistan and has no wish to interfere with it in any way. Even though Pakistan committed aggression on Indian territory in Kashmir, India has pursued peaceful methods and will continue to adhere to them. She has offered a no-war declaration to the Government of Pakistan, so that in no event should these two neighbour countries, which were one not so long ago, go to war. It is essential for the good of both that they live at peace with each other as good neighbours bound together by many links of common tradition and interest. Unfortunately, several problems have arisen between India and Pakistan and, in spite of India's efforts, they have not been solved. India will continue to seek

peaceful solutions.

Apart from the areas of the State of Jammu and Kashmir occupied by armed force by Pakistan, the State has made considerable progress during the last few years and the burdens of its people have been greatly reduced. The Congress welcomes the new Constitution of the State.

In the Union of South Africa, racialism in its most acute and offensive form has continued. The problem of the people of Indian origin in South Africa, who are citizens of that country, has merged into the larger problems of all those who are not considered to be of the white race. These are denied the rights of citizenship and are segregated. Recently, 140 persons, whites, coloured, African and Asian, were arrested by the Government of South Africa in a general round-up. Thus, a white minority suppresses the people of the country and others who are supposed to belong to an inferior race. Nowhere in the world is racialism so rampant and authoritarianism so evident. India has sought to solve this problem by peaceful and cooperative methods. But the Union Government of South Africa have refused even to discuss it. They have even ignored the resolutions and directions of the United Nations, and sown the seeds of a terrible racial conflict. The conduct of the Government of the Union of South Africa is a challenge to the conscience of mankind and to the United Nations.

In international affairs, India has consistently pursued the path of peace and friendship with all nations. In a world full of the spirit of conflict and hatred and violence, she has endeavoured to free herself from these passions and avoided military pacts and alliances. She has sought and obtained friendship and cooperation from nations which are often hostile to each other, and has been of some service to the cause of peace in Korea and Indo-China.

India's relations with the countries of Asia and Africa have been particularly close, and the Bandung Conference was a historic example of the coming together of all these nations. India and China first enunciated the Five Principles for the governance of international relations, which have subsequently become famous as the Panchsheel. It is on the basis of those

principles alone that world peace can be assured.

The years following the Second World War have witnessed great changes and have seen many colonial territories in Asia and Africa attain freedom. The old balances have thus been upset and the domination of European countries over parts of Asia and Africa has been greatly lessened. It is essential that these changes should be understood fully all over the world and no attempt should be made to deal with the countries of Asia and Africa in the old colonial way. We have seen recently that such attempts are doomed to failure, just as we have seen that any imposition of foreign authority or ideology cannot succeed.

During these years China has established a People's Republic and has developed into a strong nation, which is advancing at a rapid pace. China is a great neighbour of India and the two countries have neighbourly and friendly relations, in spite of differences in their political and economic structure. India has sought for the admission of China into the United Nations year after year, but unfortunately this was opposed by some countries. The United Nations cannot be a fully representative world organisation if it does not include this great country which has nearly one quarter of the world's population. Nor can the problems of the Far East or South-East Asia be solved without the cooperation of China.

India's foreign policy has had its objectives the avoidance of war and the maintenance of friendly relations with all countries. India is opposed to "cold war" which keeps up the mentality of war and promotes a race in armaments. As the UNESCO Constitution states "that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed". A cold war is a negation of this approach, for it fills the minds of men with fears and thoughts of war.

In the year that is just ended, India and many other countries have celebrated the 2500th year of the passing away of the Buddha. The message of this great son of India has again resounded in our ears. In a world torn by hatred and violence, his gentle voice carrying this message of compassion has come

to us through the ages. That message was repeated in our own day by Gandhiji. That is the message of India throughout these thousands of years of her history. Whatever activities we may indulge in, whether they are political or economic or social, we have to keep that message ever before us, if we are to remain true to the spirit of our country and to the service of humanity.

For three generations, it has been the privilege of the Congress to serve and identify itself with the people of India. For over sixty years, it was the standard bearer in India's struggle for freedom and, under the inspired leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, it achieved success and opened a new chapter in India's long history. For ten years, it has been responsible for the governance of this great country. In the years of struggle, as in the years of fulfilment, it has derived its strength and its capacity to work from the faith and confidence that the people of India have placed in it. Because of the people's confidence, it became a strong and well-knit organisation, capable of preserving the unity and integrity of India and undertaking the great tasks necessary for her advancement and the well-being of the people. The work it has done in Government or among the people during these ten years, is before the country for the people to judge. The great adventure still beckons to every person in India and to the success of that adventure the Congress has dedicated itself. It seeks again, therefore, a renewal from the people of India, of that faith and confidence which they have given it in such abundant measure in the past. With renewed strength firmly based on the goodwill of the people, it is determined to labour for the advancement of the Indian people and for world peace.

Third General Elections—1962

Lok Sabha and State Assemblies

TEXT OF THE ELECTION MANIFESTO

A little over fourteen years ago, India became a sovereign and independent country. That was the culmination of a long struggle, waged by the Indian National Congress under the inspiring leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. That struggle was unique in many ways; the mere fact of the future of a vast country with hundreds of millions of inhabitants being involved in it, gave it great significance. But the outstanding feature of that struggle was the leadership of Gandhiji who evolved a new technique of peaceful methods and non-violence in order to combat the might of a great empire. On one side there was imperialism which had exploited the people and enfeebled their spirit; on the other side there were the poverty-stricken people of India and a backward and stagnant economy; with one of the lowest per capita incomes in the world, the result of colonial rule for a long period. The great movements led by the National Congress and inspired by Gandhiji taught the lesson of unity, self-reliance and self-sacrifice to our people and gave them the sense of dedication to a great cause which pulled them out of their despair and helplessness and produced hope and strength.

This period of struggle under Gandhiji has become a shining era in India's history, not only because of the success it achieved and the moral and ethical quality of the struggle, but also because of the high standards and principles that Gandhiji gave us. Even as the struggle proceeded, Congress developed a social and economic content for the freedom it was striving

for, and political independence became ever more associated with the advancement of the unprivileged and dispossessed and those who had to suffer economic and social disabilities. Great men and women, who have become enshrined in India's long story, suffered and sacrificed, but above all, there were the common people of India in their millions who participated in these mighty movements and risked their all so that freedom might come.

That freedom came in its fullness and the dream of ages past was thus accomplished and the pledge taken by the people of India fulfilled. But, even in their triumph, there was the disaster following the partition of India—death and sorrow and uprooting of millions of people. To crown this disaster came the assassination of the beloved leader who had led us to victory.

Immediately realisation came that our task was only partly fulfilled and that the major part of it remained. There was not only poverty and economic stagnation but also a society socially and economically backward, caste-ridden and often faction-ridden and tied to out-of-date practices and traditions. The aftermath of the Partition and the murder of the beloved leader brought out, at the very moment of triumph, the narrowness, bigotry and backwardness of some of our social groups.

Together with the achievement of freedom came a sense of the vastness of the problems that faced us and the tremendous burdens that we had to carry. Only a small stage of our pilgrimage had been accomplished. The real perils and dangers lay ahead. The National Congress, which had led the country to freedom, had inevitably to shoulder the obligations and burdens that came with it. It addressed itself to this mighty task with humility and with the ever-inspiring memory of the great leader who had passed away. In continuation of the basic ideals and politics that it had pursued it tried to fashion both its domestic policy and its foreign policy of peaceful methods and friendly and cooperative approaches. Immediately the country had to face the great problem of settling and rehabilitating millions of uprooted people whose life had been dislocated by the Partition and the troubles that followed it. It had to unify the

country and to integrate into the Union of India the numerous princely states that were spread all over the country. Within a relatively short period of time these princely states became integral parts of India, and this great change was brought about peacefully and with the minimum of conflict.

The principal problem that faced the country was struggle against poverty and social and economic backwardness. As early as 1931, the Congress had laid down an economic programme; in 1936, an agrarian programme had been adopted; and towards the end of 1938, a National Planning Committee was constituted by the Congress, many years before Independence came. Thus the idea of planning for economic and social growth came into prominence in India.

On the eve of independence, the interim Government constituted an Advisory Planning Board to collect all available material and prepare for an organised planned approach to our problems. Early in 1950, soon after the adoption of the new Constitution by the Constituent Assembly of India, a Planning Commission was established to assess the country's material, capital and human resources and to formulate a Plan for their most effective and balanced utilisation. In the new Constitution, the basic objectives were set forth as "the Directive Principles of State Policy." Those general principles were given more precise direction in December 1954 when Parliament adopted the "Socialist Pattern of Society" as the objective of social and economic Policy.

The two main aims guiding India after Independence, were to establish firmly a democratic political structure based on the parliamentary form of Government, and to build up by democratic means a rapidly expanding and technologically progressive economy, and a social order based on justice and offering equal opportunity to every citizen. The First Five-Year Plan was launched with these objectives in view. The means at our disposal at the time were limited, and the data available inadequate. The immediate objectives laid down in the First Plan were achieved, and this success gave confidence to the nation. The Second Five Year Plan was based on greater experience and more knowledge. It set forth larger goals and a long-term

strategy for economic and industrial advance based on the socialist pattern of society.

Thus India entered a new era, the greatest period of transformation in her history. This involved not only political changes, but basic, social and economic changes and, above all, a transformation of a caste and faction-ridden backward society into a unified and integrated community, rapidly marching towards economic prosperity and higher standards for her vast population. This meant changing semi-feudal and traditional methods of production and distribution and introducing modern methods in line with the development of science and technology. It meant the establishment of a technologically mature society in the framework of a socialist economy which gave the benefits of this advance to all. It meant not only an adherence to the ethical and moral principles which had always been India's past background, but the introduction of new social values and incentives and the development of a sense of common interest and obligation among all sections of the community.

The immediate effect of the changes that were progressively taking place by the growth of democracy, of education, and of industry was often not wholly in the right direction. Thus while caste, which has originally an instrument for the definition of rights and duties and had subsequently developed into right and static forms, progressively lost its social and functional character and began to exhibit itself in the political field and in elections as sinister collections of interested groups. The great spread of education led immediately to greater unemployment of those who had passed through school and colleges, even though numerous avenues of new employment were being created. The attraction of political power led to factions and numerous political groupings; the general release of energy often led people in a wrong direction; even language became a source of friction and trouble, although our Constitution and general practice had given the largest freedom and place of honour to all the great languages of India. Communalism, the sign of a backward society, raised its head again to oppose the march of the Indian people towards new goals and a new and

modern social set up. Thus the question of national integration became of basic importance for, without it, bigotry, obscurantism and reaction might well prevent social and economic growth.

It is through these many perils and dangerous rocks that the Congress has endeavoured to steer the ship of State during these past years. Keeping its ideals and objectives always before it, it has struggled against reaction and bigotry and tried to build up a new and prosperous India in tune with her past ideals and in keeping also with the ideals of the modern world. It has aimed at a progressive socialised economy in which all can share and there are no great disparities, and at the same time it has attached value to the freedom and growth of the individual. The task has been and continues to be a stupendous one and there have been many disappointments and failures. But in spite of errors and mistakes, and in spite of national calamities that have descended upon us year after year and difficulties created by the conflicts and 'cold war' in the world, the march of the Indian people has continued towards the next stage of their great pilgrimage.

This march can best be gauged by the success of the Five-Year Plans, the two Plans that are over and the Third which has just begun. The Third Plan indicates not only the direction in which we are going, but the positive steps that we have to take and the targets that we have to reach. Statistical information is available to show the growth of basic and heavy industries as well as small and medium industries, the marked improvement in our agricultural methods and in agricultural production, the advance of our science and technology, and the progress made by the country in a variety of fields of human activity. At the same time it is obvious that vast numbers of our people, and more especially the scheduled tribes and castes, and other backward classes, still live in poverty, sometimes lacking even the minimum amenities in rural areas. In spite of the new and vast scope for employment, there are large numbers of unemployed and underemployed. In spite of our aim and desire for the removal of disparities, these continue and sometimes have become even more marked. It is easy to point these

out, as it is even more easy to point out the advances made in many fields. In this critical period of struggle against poverty and backwardness, it is difficult to have all-round balanced growth at the same time, even though we should aim at that. Inevitably certain priorities have to be given so as to build strong foundations which would enable progress to be rapid in the future. We have aimed at this by laying stress on agriculture, basic and heavy industries and on education and technical training.

In the vast and variegated picture of India today, with its bright as well as dark spots, three facts stand out; one is that in 1950-51, 24 million boys and girls went to school and college; now this figure has gone up to 45 million. By the end of the Third Plan, this number is likely to reach 65 million. The number of persons getting technical training is also increasing rapidly. Thus an investment is being made in man, which is the most important of all.

The second point which is worthy of notice is that the expectation of life in India has risen from about 32 in the forties to 47.5 now. This is a remarkable advance. It is no doubt due to better health and eradication and control of some diseases. But it is also due to better living conditions, especially better and more food. This advance in the expectation of life, covering as it does the whole population, is an important indication of the general progress made by the entire community. It is particularly significant in view of the rapid growth of the population of India, which has now reached, according to the census of 1961, 438 millions.

The third significant fact is the growth of the Community Development programme, leading to what is called Panchayati Raj. On the 1st September 1961, there were 3,369 blocks covering approximately four hundred thousand villages and 218 million population. Thus, 72 per cent of the villages in the country have been covered by this programme which deals with not only agriculture, but other activities also, such as, animal husbandry, village industries, social education, health and rural sanitation. By the end of 1963 the Community Development movement will have covered the entire rural area. It is true that

progress in Community Development has not been uniform throughout India and some areas have lagged behind. Nevertheless the vast spread of this movement over rural India has had a powerful and catalytic effect in changing the background of life and activities in the villages. The approach was a co-ordinate multipurpose one aiming at the development of the countryside.

This Community Development movement led to what has been called Panchayati Raj or democratic decentralisation. This Panchayati Raj began in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh and is at present under implementation also in Assam, Madras, Mysore and Orissa. Progress has been made towards it in the Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Bihar. It is hoped that the remaining States will follow suit soon.

Panchayati Raj is a remarkable attempt at the devolution of authority to democratic institutions of the people in the villages. The normal tendency in many countries has been for power to be centralised at the expense of the people. While a measure of centralisation becomes inevitable under modern conditions Panchayati Raj is a deliberate attempt to lessen this centralisation and to spread power and authority among the people. This has revolutionary significance. Although it is only recently started, the change in the outlook of the village is noticeable. There is a measure of self-reliance and a feeling that they are themselves responsible for local developments. The distance between officers of Government and the people is being lessened and there is greater cooperation between them. Through Panchayati Raj and people's cooperation, other changes become easier, such as, the development of education and cooperatives in the rural areas. Altogether, this movement is of great significance for over eighty per cent of the population of India, who live in rural areas, and is likely to have far-reaching consequences. Panchayati Raj brings new and great opportunities to the people of the villages and we are confident that they will organise and prepare themselves to assume these new responsibilities.

The Third Plan is itself an indication of the road we have

to travel during the coming years. But planning cannot be limited to five-year periods. It becomes essential to have a long-term view and to look at the future we are seeking to mould. Thus, the necessity of perspective planning becomes evident and a strategy for development is laid down. Each step taken has to be inter-linked with others in a chain of development aiming at advance in all sectors and in all branches of the nation's activities, and in making the country self-reliant, so that dependence on external assistance may disappear as early as possible. The process of development is not limited to specific periods, but is a continuous one and the objectives for each period are to be considered in connection with the larger perspective. Unless the larger perspective is kept in view, short term objectives may lead to wrong results. Perspective planning has to take into account the growth of population and the coordinated approach to industrial and agricultural growth as well as to the economy of large-scale and small-scale units. Development of basic and heavy industries and small industry, the growth of rural industrialisation and the linking up of industrial and rural economy, become parts of the comprehensive design. A long-term view also makes it easier to consider the development of different regions in the country so as to bring about, as far as possible, balanced growth all over the country. The importance of perspective planning has been more and more recognised and, indeed, is now considered to be essential. It is proposed to draw up a perspective plan for the next fifteen years.

Cities and urban areas having been expanding owing to the progress of industrialisation, and slum areas have grown during these years, housing accommodation has not kept pace with the increasing requirements, and large numbers of the people in towns and cities lack the necessary minimum amenities. Much greater attention should be given to the improvement of these conditions.

The first two Plans have laid sound foundations for social and economic growth. The basis for better agriculture has been laid ; larger power supplies are available ; heavy industry, including large steel plants, has come into existence ; and

large-scale machine building plants are under construction. All this has prepared the ground for more rapid progress in the course of the Third Plan. This period is a crucial one for India's growth. On the success of the Third Plan will depend the establishment of socially balanced and increasingly prosperous and integrated community. It will also advance towards the achievement of a self-sustaining and self-generating economy. Taking full advantage of modern science and techniques, emphasis has to be laid on basic industries, such as steel, power, fuel oil, machine building and also transport. Thus, the tempo of industrialisation of the country will increase rapidly.

The fundamental problem in India is not only to increase greatly the living standards of the people, but also to bring about progressively social and economic equality. Existing inequalities and disparities in the social fabric are ethically wrong and will obstruct progress on all fronts and produce considerable strains. The new social order must preserve the worth and dignity of the individual and create a sense of equality, fraternity and of cohesion. While adequate motives and inducements have to be provided, these must not be based on an acquisitive structure of society, which tends to produce greater inequalities and which is not in keeping with the temper of our people and the spirit of the present age. The objective aimed at can therefore only be achieved by a socialist and cooperative approach.

The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956 lays down in clear terms the policy to be pursued in the programme of industrialisation of the country. In view of our policy of socialisation, the public sector will increasingly expand and play a dominant role, both for the purpose of accelerating the speed of industrialisation and yielding additional resources. Public, private and cooperative sectors should function in unison as parts of a single mechanism. It should be emphasised that only through the successful and efficient functioning of these three sectors that the industrial programme can be successfully implemented.

While the increase in production is essential, and therefore the private sector is to be encouraged in its particular fields of activity, the growth of the corporate private sector during the

past ten years has raised new problems. How can economic growth be secured without the growth of monopolist tendencies and the concentration of economic power? There are certain advantages in favour of the growth of larger enterprises. But if excessive economic power rests in a few hands, this may disturb the balance of power in a democratic society and expose the social structure to new stresses and tensions. It would come in the way of diffusion of economic opportunities and may even interfere with proper planning. This question, therefore, deserves careful consideration. Normally the larger enterprises should be in the public sector; opportunities should be given for new entrants and medium and small size units as well as for industries organised on cooperative lines. Government should exercise effectively its powers of control and the use of appropriate fiscal measures.

In recent years a number of financial and promotional institutions have been established, such as the Industrial Finance Corporation, the State Finance Corporations, the Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India and others. In the light of experience gained, these and other financial institutions should review their existing policies and practices so as to ensure that their support is given to new entrants into industry and to medium and small enterprises as well as to cooperative undertakings. Such assistance should be speedy and adequate. Criteria should be devised for assessing the progress in these directions.

The resources of the Life Insurance Corporation could also be used in material assistance in the furtherance of these objectives. More particularly, the Life Insurance Corporation should invest its funds in housing projects, as is done by Life Insurance Companies in other countries.

The establishment of Industrial Estates, specially in rural areas, is to be welcomed, as these help in the dispersal of industry and the development of rural area and take industrialisation to the small town and the village. Municipalities and Panchayats should encourage small industries in order to help in dispersal of such industries.

Experience gained in the functioning of industries in the

public sector has pointed to appropriate organisational and administrative changes to ensure proper and efficient functioning. In particular those in charge of industrial undertakings should be given greater powers and responsibilities.

Industry and agriculture are closely connected and on the development of each depends the development of the other. It is through widespread industrial growth that higher standards in production and consumption can be reached. But industrial growth itself depends upon the improvement in agriculture. Agriculture is thus today and will continue to be the most important factor of our economy, and on its expanding production will depend progress in industry and other fields. Therefore, modern methods and techniques have to be applied in increasing measure, always keeping in view the conditions existing in India. Considerable progress has been made in agricultural production. The target of foodgrains fixed for the Second Plan was 80.5 million tons; the achievement has been 79.3 million tons. This progress has not only to be maintained, but speeded up.

Agrarian reforms are the basis for rural progress. Much has been done in the past years in regard to such reforms. These reforms, including the ceiling on land, must be given effect to as soon as possible in all the States.

The essence of progress in agriculture depends upon co-operatives. In India, particularly, where the holdings are very small, co-operatives are essential. The Cooperative Movement in India has developed satisfactorily, more particularly during the last few years. There are at present over 200,000 primary agricultural credit societies with a membership of 17 million and nearly 1900 primary marketing societies. The small and medium term credit to the agriculturists through co-operatives which was at Rs. 23 crores at the beginning of the First Plan increased to Rs. 50 crores at the end of the First Plan and Rs. 200 crores at the end of the Second Plan. It is expected to reach the figure of Rs. 530 crores by the end of the Third Plan. Long term credit to the agriculturists through Co-operatives which was at Rs. 13 crores at the end of the Third Plan period reached Rs. 34 crores at the end of the Second Plan period as

against the Plan target of Rs. 25 crores. By the end of the Third Plan it is hoped to reach a figure of Rs. 150 crores. It is proposed to spread service cooperatives throughout the rural areas and, wherever possible, and agreed to, to have cooperative farming. Cooperation as well as modern farming technique and animal husbandry require training of the farmers and workers. Such training should be provided for on a large scale.

Electric power is of paramount importance not only for the growth of large scale industry but also for the development of agriculture and small and village industries. The programme of rural electrification should, therefore, be expanded, and a definite percentage of the electric power produced in each State should be made available for this purpose.

The Congress has always laid stress on the importance of balanced development of different parts of the country and on extending the benefits of planned development to the more backward regions. This has to be particularly kept in mind in the location of new enterprises, whether public or private, and where location of an industry has not to be determined almost entirely by unavoidable factors, the more backward regions should be preferred for such location.

The ending of unemployment is of vital importance both from the economic and social points of view. One of the important objectives of economic growth is to put an end to unemployment. This will, no doubt, take place through widespread industrialisation. But that will take some time, and meanwhile it is necessary to take other measures also to utilise the manpower resources of the country by creating employment opportunities in nation-building activities. In this context, the important place of village industries should be stressed and arrangements made for improvement of techniques and the training of personnel. This is especially desirable in the field of processing of raw materials and production of consumers' goods. Normally the processing of agriculture, horticulture, forests and animal husbandry produce should be done through small scale industries as far as possible in areas where such produce grows. This processing should be done by cooperatives and facilities should be given to such cooperatives in the matter of

electric power and credit.

The Social Services, and more especially Education and Health, should be expanded, greater attention being paid to economically and educationally backward people. The test for giving particular attention should be that of economic backwardness. Thus low income groups, irrespective of castes and communities, should receive consideration.

Education and specialised technical training are of vital importance for social and economic progress. Education begins from the child and the care and proper development of the child should be the beginning of education. Proper provision should be made for child welfare programme for children of the pre-school age. It is provided in the Third Plan that universal free education should be given to children in the age group 5 to 11. Mid-day meals have been provided already in primary schools in some States. Wherever possible, the provision of mid-day meals as well as of uniforms for children should be made with the cooperation of the people.

Poverty or lack of resources should not stand in the way of education of any boy or girl. A widespread scheme of scholarship as well as loans should be provided for boys and girls who have shown merit in their studies so that they may be able to continue their studies both in general education and technical and other specialised training.

In the industrial economy of the country, the role of the working class cannot be overemphasised. Ultimately the quality and pace of industrial development depends upon the efficiency of the workers. It is therefore necessary to devote continuing attention to the training and well-being of the workers and to associate them progressively in the management of the enterprises.

Prices of essential commodities should be stabilised and training on State Account should be undertaken wherever this is found feasible. The establishment of Consumer Cooperatives should be encouraged. Producers of foodgrains must get a reasonable return and the farmer should be assured that prices of foodgrains and other commodities he produces will not be allowed to fall below a reasonable minimum.

Production of luxury and non-essential articles should be discouraged. An increase in the rate of saving for investments is essential, and consumption has therefore to be controlled. It is necessary that the rate of saving should be stepped up from the present level of nearly 8 per cent of national income to 11 per cent.

Taxation should be so devised as to aim at lessening disparities of income and increasing the resources available for development. In view of ceiling on land being fixed in rural areas, the question of having a similar ceiling on urban incomes has been raised. The same principle is not wholly applicable to urban incomes. But it is necessary to have some limitations on high urban incomes through taxation and other means in order so lessen the great disparities that exist today.

A large number of people in India, especially those living in the rural areas and those who are landless, have at present an income which is even below the average per capita income of India, low as that is. This class should deserve particular attention; where land is available, this should be provided by them, perfectly on a cooperative basis; employment in some form or other should be encouraged for them, and certain essential amenities should be provided.

Certain basic amenities also require to be provided in the rural areas. There should be no village at the end of the Third Plan without adequate provision of drinking water, primary school and proper approach road.

In the implementation of programmes of planned development, the governmental administrative machinery has necessarily to play a vital role. It is highly important, therefore, to gear up the administration, to avoid delays, and to improve its quality to fulfil the tasks allotted to it adequately. For this purpose, there should be decentralisation of authority, allocation of responsibility and proper appraisals of work done.

In view of the fast growth of the population of India and the probability that this growth will continue for some time because of improvement of health and the amenities of life, family planning and birth control have assumed great importance. Unless these are attended to adequately, the living

standard of the people will continue to be depressed and the problems of unemployment will become increasingly difficult.

The Congress has often stated its policy in regard to the language to be used in the fields of education and administration. Recently, meetings of the Chief Ministers have elaborated this policy. The Congress accords its approval to the proposals made at these meetings.

The Congress policy of Prohibition should be maintained and encouraged. In doing so, while efforts are being made to increase its effectiveness, care should be taken to remove the evils that have flown from the manner of its implementation.

International Affairs

The basic policy of the Congress, which has been adopted by Parliament and the country, is to work for peace and the friendship of all countries, and at the same time to avoid alignment with military blocs and alliances. This policy must be firmly pursued. Peace and progress in the world depend upon the ending of colonialism and imperialism and an effective and widespread disarmament. To achieve these major ends, the Government should continue to direct its efforts.

Disarmament which has been long considered and discussed, has now become an immediate and essential necessity because of the terrible consequences of modern war and the impending threats to human survival as a result of the use of weapons of mass destruction. No partial disarmament can at this stage succeed in assuring peace. Therefore, no limited or balanced reduction of weapons will bring about genuine disarmament. There has to be a determined approach to total disarmament even though this may be brought about in a phased way. Thus only can a world without war be created by the abandonment of war itself as a method of settling disputes between nations. The Congress particularly deplores the revival of nuclear tests which not only produce harmful results for the present and for future generations of humanity, but also add to the tensions prevailing in the world and the possibility of war.

The ending of colonial domination has made considerable progress during recent years. Nevertheless, there is still the domination of colonial powers over vast territories, notably in Africa by the Portuguese Government, where, according to reports, large scale massacres of the people have taken place. The people of Algeria who have suffered terribly for many years in their struggle for freedom should attain their full independence. It is imperative that these and other remnants of colonialism should be liquidated. Goa, which is part of India, must be brought into the Indian Union.

It is the first duty of a State to preserve its freedom and integrity and to resist any encroachment on them. The Congress, therefore, reiterates the resolves of the Indian people to maintain the integrity of India's territory, effective defence of her frontiers, and to repel any aggression that may take place. Parts of the territory of the Indian Union have been occupied by Pakistan and China. It must be India's policy to bring about vacation of these illegal occupations. According to her basic policy, India seeks peaceful settlements with other countries, but it cannot tolerate aggression from any quarter. Efforts must, therefore, continue to be made to recover such areas.

The progress of the Indian people depends above all on their unity and cohesion and the integrity of our country. Communal and sectarian approaches are not only bad in principle, but harmful in their results and weaken the nation. Thus it is of primary importance to counter these narrow, disruptive and separatist approaches and to work for the full unity and integrity of the country.

The Congress has always stood and stands today for a united, non-sectarian and secular India. It believes that only on this basis can our country progress and achieve greatness, which is her due. It is to maintain and preserve with this basic approach and the policies enunciated in this manifesto that the Congress approaches the vast electorate of India and seeks its support and cooperation in the mighty tasks that face our country.

Fourth General Elections—1967

Lok Sabha and State Assemblies

TEXT OF THE ELECTION MANIFESTO

It has been the proud privilege of the Indian National Congress to serve the country for over eighty years. These years constitute a unique chapter of India's long history. In this short span India produced a succession of great men and women and felt the impact of revolutionary ideas in political, social, economic and cultural fields. Thus emerged a great revolutionary movement led by the Indian National Congress against the forces of colonialism and imperialism culminating in the Independence of India.

Open and Democratic Society

With the advent of freedom India entered on a new phase of reconstruction and transformation. This calls for hard decisions, bold innovation and upsetting of many established patterns of thought and living. India under the leadership of the Indian National Congress has deliberately made a choice in favour of an open and democratic society. In proclaiming democracy as our way of life we emphasise not only its central concept of political equality but also its equalitarian implications in social and economic fields. True to the genius of our movement for political emancipation and in the faith that enduring good to society cannot come through violence, we have decided to bring about through the open and democratic process the social and economic changes our society needs.

Nation's Approval

The nation has placed its seal of approval through three successive elections on the basic policies and programmes of the Congress. These policies and programmes were embodied in the three Five Year Plans which were designed to take the country towards a socialist society where the principal means of production will be under social ownership and control, production will be progressively speeded up raising the standard of living of the people and there is equality of opportunity and equitable distribution of the national wealth. In an economically under-developed society like ours, the very structure of political power and its interlinking with command over economic resources make it necessary that the commanding height of economy shall not be in private hands. For, they who hold the levers of economic power will also ultimately run the political apparatus. The free exercise of the democratic process demands therefore the intervention of the State in the running of the economy of the country.

Goal of Democratic Socialist Society

In our country with a vast and growing population and low living standards of the bulk of the people, the existing disparities in wealth and incomes are especially galling. Without mobilising economic resources and speeding up processes of economic development to the maximum extent, standards of general well-being cannot be raised to a substantial degree. There will, however, be inordinate delays in the redress of inequalities if the levelling up of the living standards of the under-privileged in the country is left to the normal course of economic development and the play of market forces. If the people are not able to see for themselves visible and early advance in the achievement of social justice, the release of new social energy and productive forces will be impeded and this will come in the way of full realisation of our potential of economic growth. It is, therefore, imperative that the State should play an active and dynamic role in planning, guiding and

directing the economic development of the country. It is for these reasons that the Indian National Congress has placed before the country the goal of a democratic socialist society. The nation has accepted planned development as the method for the attainment of this goal. Successive five year plans have helped us to move forward in this direction. The Draft outline of the Fourth Plan has embodied policies and programmes which are designed to secure substantial realisation of our objectives.

We had in the early stages the guidance of Gandhiji and then the wise stewardship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. They enjoyed in a unique measure the affection and understanding of the Indian people. After the death of Jawaharlalji, it fell to Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri to shoulder the heavy burden. He carried on bravely for 19 months when it an hour of triumph after the conclusion of the Tashkent agreement he left us. The mantle has now fallen on a new generation in the midst of increasing difficulties.

Emergence of a New Society

When India attained freedom, many were the prophets of gloom and disaster who predicted the disintegration of the Indian democracy. The partition of India placed a heavy strain on the concept of secularism which is vital to the maintenance of our society. There were 500 and odd Indian States with their separate identities. The Congress, thanks to the statesmanship of Sardar Patel, steered the country through these troubled days and built up an integrated India.

A new society is emerging in India. The Indian National Congress is proud to play a dynamic role in this process. Over the last twenty years, Governments formed under the leadership of the Congress legislated and implemented many far-reaching changes in our social and economic structure. Measures were adopted to deal a powerful blow to untouchability, a curse which blighted the lives of millions of centuries. However, much more remains to be done in this field. The tribal people who had been cut off from the mainstream of our

national life for years are now coming into their own. The door of opportunity has been thrown open for the women of India in all the vital spheres of national life. A new awareness permeates every nook and corner of the country.

In the last two decades there have been real beginnings of an industrial and scientific revolution in the country. This has given a new dimension to the awakening and aspirations of our people. The scientific and technical education of our boys and girls on an ever-increasing scale is a significant aspect of this new society. We have today a reservoir of young and talented scientists and technologists with the capacity and ability to foster further growth and progress of scientific research and development. Modern transport and communications are opening up the country, making available new facilities of education and economic opportunity to what were hitherto remote and almost inaccessible areas in the country. Electricity in industry and agriculture is revolutionising the lives of the people who are enjoying its benefits. Our aim is to take it to every village. We are also laying foundations for the use of atomic energy for constructive and peaceful purposes. Establishment of the Panchayati institutions is a revolutionary step promoting mass participation in the administrative process and the economic reconstruction of the country at the village level.

Economic Advance

In 1965-66 India produced 4.6 million tonnes of finished steel as against 1.04 million tonnes in 1950-51. During the same period the production of cement increased to 10.8 million tonnes as against 2.70 million tonnes while the production of cloth increased to 7580 million metres from 4318 million metres. Per capita availability of cloth has increased from 11 metres to 15 metres per annum. Installed Electricity Power capacity has increased more than 4 times from 2.3 million Kw to 10.2 million Kw. The number of villages and towns electrified has increased from 3,700 to 52,300. The most remarkable increase has been in petroleum products which have increased from 0.2 million tonnes to 9.4 million tonnes. In 1965-66 there

were nearly 68 million boys and girls attending school as against 24 million in 1950-51. The number of students in arts and science colleges rose from 3 lakh to 11 lakh during 1950-51 to 1965-66. The production of nitrogenous fertilisers has increased to 2 33 lakh tonnes in 1965-66 in comparison with 9,000 tonnes in 1950-51. The area under irrigation has increased by 45 million acres. During the period 1950-51 to 1965-66 production of foodgrains has increased from 55 million tonnes to over 88 million tonnes. Per capita consumption of food has increased from 12.8 to 15.4 oz. per day. Plant protection measures cover an area of 41 million acres. Nearly 5 lakh pumps have been set up and 7 lakh new wells dug in the villages. During the three plan period the number of hospitals and dispensaries has risen from 8,600 to 14,600. The annual average earnings of workers in industries have risen from Rs. 883 to Rs. 1,475. All these are reflected in the increase in life span from 32 to 50 years.

Aggression by China and Pakistan

In 1962 we faced the unexpected and unprovoked invasion of our motherland by China. Closely following this was the aggression by Pakistan initially in Kutch and thereafter in Kashmir and other parts of the country. Twice during the last five years the people of India rallied in a remarkable way for the defence of the country. The Indian National Congress pays its homage to the valiant jawans and the officers of the Armed Forces and to the police and remembers with gratitude those who died or were wounded on the battle-field. The nation is pledged to vacate aggression on its territories. The Congress stands committed to redeem that pledge.

Unprecedented Difficulties

The picture of steady and uninterrupted growth during the last three plans has been distorted by the effects of last year's unprecedented drought and the aftermath of the struggle against the Pakistani aggressors. These setbacks to progress

make it all the more necessary that the coming years should see increased and redoubled effort to speed up the full development of our economy. The Fourth and Fifth Plans occupy a crucial place in the perspective of India's development. During the coming few years we must intensify our efforts for self-reliant and progressive economy.

Modern Science and Technology

A modern society can only be built on the foundations of science and technology. The men of science and technology will be the kingpins of the economic and social transformation of India. The Indian National Congress has confidence in the young scientists and technologists of India, who have shown that they are second to none in skill, competence and dedication. There is great need for the administrators of the country to place complete trust in Indian engineering, Indian skills and Indian talents. The Indian National Congress hopes that technological self-reliance will be the key-note of the coming years. The Congress also calls on the Government to so alter the conditions of work and service as to attract our best men from whichever part of the world they may be working in now. In an age of science and technology in which we need the best skills and competence, no foreign aid can replace the loss of skills as a result of the drain of some of our ablest students to other countries. The Indian National Congress calls on the Government of India and the Governments in the States and private industry to create conditions to arrest this.

External Assistance

While recognising that during the initial stage of economic development external assistance plays an important role, it is essential to reduce the period to the minimum and to diminish speedily the amount and range of external assistance. This can be done only by producing to the maximum, increasing our export earnings, reducing our imports of essentials and eliminating import of non-essentials. Whatever external aid we

may obtain should be used wholly for the building up of such sectors of our economy as will accelerate our movement towards self reliance. Machine building, fertilisers, petroleum, metallurgical industries and development of highly trained personnel are among the steps that will quicken the transition. The Indian National Congress realises that the spirit of Swadeshi needs to be urgently strengthened in the new context of economic and industrial development. The movement for import substitution, which has been facilitated by recent measures of the government and has become even more essential, should be pushed forward to the utmost. The Indian National Congress calls on all sections of the people, and more specially on industry and enterprise and on scientists and technologists, to cooperate actively with the Government in this vital task.

Dynamic Public Sector

A dynamic and growing public sector is an important tool for a socialist transformation of our society. During the last three Plans, an important base has been laid for this. The public sector produces 2.48 million tonnes of finished steel today as against nil at the commencement of planning. The public sector has also taken an important share in machine tools, machine building, mining and ship building.

The nationalisation of life insurance and the Imperial Bank of India were important landmarks in the growth of the public sector in India. The plans for investment in the Fourth and Fifth Plans contemplate an increasing role for the public sector. Various measures are being contemplated and explored for the improvement of public sector so that it functions effectively and efficiently. The Indian National Congress calls on Government to expedite the implementation of these measures speedily.

Cooperative Movement

The scope of the cooperative movement has enlarged considerably. The movement now covers many millions of people and many types of activity. The short-term credit provided by

the Reserve Bank of India for the cooperative movement has risen from 12.40 crores in 1951-52 to 200 crores in 1964-65. The task of making agricultural credit available at the right time and in proper measure is now engaging the attention of the authorities concerned and means are being devised for starting new institutions in States where the movement has not taken root. The movement has covered not only credit for the agriculturist but also for multipurpose societies which cover agricultural and marketing operations as also for processing of agricultural products. At the moment the Reserve Bank of India is engaged in a further study in regard to the promotion of rural credit in agricultural and other operations. The future development of our rural areas is inextricably connected with considerable enlargement of this movement for which all needed resources and facilities should be provided.

Cooperative movement has also spread in the field of industry, particularly the small and medium industries and the handloom industry. In order to serve handloom industries, a large number of cooperative spinning mills has been started.

Lately the spiralling of prices has cast considerable burden on the government and caused hardship to the people. One of the effective ways of checking prices is by means of consumer cooperative stores which link the producer and the consumer. This movement cannot succeed unless we get the whole-hearted cooperation of the people, particularly our women folk, which we have reasons to hope will be forthcoming. Once a network of cooperative stores is established, we could have an effective check on the prices of many essential articles.

Banking and other Credit Institutions

Closely allied with the development of the cooperative movement and the provision of funds are the institutions that provide credit like banks and other financial institutions. A great step forward in controlling the operation of banking was taken by us when we nationalised the Imperial Bank. The State Bank and its affiliates have expanded considerably in the direction of banking during all these years and have covered roughly 30% of the deposits and advances. Even so there is a large

area which is still left untouched. It is necessary to bring most of these banking institutions under social control in order to serve the cause of economic growth and fulfil our social purposes more effectively and to make credit available to the producer in all fields where it is needed.

Price Stabilisation

The country is rightly anxious and uneasy about the steep rise in prices in recent years. Increased production, the practice of austerity and necessary measures and discipline in the monetary and fiscal field are the essential basis of price stabilisation. But there are other institutional measures which can help this stabilisation particularly for the low income and fixed income groups. Procurement, building of buffer stocks, supplies of basic consumer goods at controlled prices through a chain of consumer cooperatives and other socially controlled channels are obvious means.

Social Change and Urban Disparities

The pattern of conspicuous and wasteful display which increasingly characterise some of the urban areas are out of place in a socialist society. They also constitute a drain on the resources available to the community for productive investment. There is thus compelling need to impose limitations on urban income and property. Concrete steps should, therefore, be taken for placing restrictions on individual holdings of urban land for preventing racketeering in land in urban areas. The lower middle and working classes should be enabled to secure housing sites at reasonable rates. The problem of slums has not been so far tackled effectively. Among other measures in dealing with this problem the Government should promote dispersal of industries to the utmost extent.

Over-Crowding in Cities

Industrialisation is leading to over-crowding in cities. Both

the economic and social costs of over-crowding are heavy. Alongwith rural industrialisation and other schemes for the utilisation of resources in rural areas new townships should be developed so that the large manpower is absorbed increasingly by these new centres. The rapid diffusion of electric power should facilitate the development.

Education

The most advanced societies are those in which education receives the highest attention. Particularly is this so in a society committed to socialism. To enable every individual to express his personality to the fullest extent and contribute to the development of society, the maximum facility for education should be provided. Every child of school-going age, whatever his economic or social background, should be enabled to obtain the highest skills which the educational system of the country can provide. A scheme of scholarships which will enable the poorest to go through education should be established. Simultaneously, the country has to realise that no educational system can deliver the goods unless the teachers are respected and receive adequate incentives. The coming years should see a deliberate orientation of resources for their betterment.

In this modern age of science and technology, education is the most important investment in skills. Rapid economic development needs the deepening of the expansion of scientific and technical education. It is also necessary to integrate our programmes of technical educational development with training facilities in our newer industries so that gap between theory and practice is reduced and better utilisation of facilities becomes possible. A comprehensive plan should be drawn up to link employment opportunities with educational facilities. Emphasis on technical and vocational skills should replace the generalised training bias of our education. Vigorous efforts should be made for adult education and to wipe out illiteracy.

Labour

Labour has a vital role to play in the economic development

and reconstruction of the country. There has been a great deal of legislation to ensure that progressively labour has a fair deal. Apart from a fair wage, other reasonable conditions of work and minimum social security there is need for institutionally established facilities to enable labour participation in management.

Employment

The quality of our planning will be judged by, among other tests, the manner and the degree to which we employ the vast manpower of India. Non-utilisation of our vast manpower is one of the central weaknesses of the economy we inherited at the time of our independence. The whole process of building a new order means providing new opportunities for work and employment. It is now realised that neither agriculture nor large-scale industry nor even both of them together can absorb the growing number of the unemployed and under-employed especially in the villages. Improved methods of agriculture, increase in the number of crops in the year, work on improvement of minor irrigation, building of social service institutions and large-scale industries will, of course, provide employment on an increasing scale, but that by itself cannot meet the needs of the situation. A comprehensive programme of decentralised industry in the rural area implemented with drive and a sense of paramount urgency can make a large contribution to the solution of the vast problem of unemployment. For the purpose of enlarging the opportunities of employment it is imperative that the level of productivity should rise continuously reflecting increasingly effective use of man power and other resources of the nation. This is also indispensable for raising the standards of living of the people generally.

Land Policies

Our land policies have during the period of three plans introduced some major changes in the agrarian structure. The intermediary tenancies which prevailed in many parts of the

country have been done away with. Land ceilings have been fixed in most States. Laws for tenancy reforms have also been enacted in many States. It is obvious that the land reforms have in some respects not been implemented effectively. The implementation should improve.

Agricultural Labour

An important problem is to give a new deal to agricultural labour. The State should give special attention to their problem. Land availability being limited it will be possible to provide cultivable land only to a fraction of agricultural labour. For the bulk of them other avenues of part or full employment have to be found, such as processing and other industries, animal husbandry, fisheries, labour and construction cooperatives etc. Credit should be made available to them against personal security or assets that are to be created. Minimum wage legislation for agricultural labour should be implemented more effectively.

Modernisation of Agriculture

The modernisation of India's agriculture is an immediate challenge before the country. Experience of the last two or three years has shown the dangers of low productive potential in agriculture. From this point of view the programme of the Government of India to increase production of foodgrains to 120 million tonnes in 1970-71 acquires the greatest significance. The earliest attainment of self sufficiency in foodgrains should be, as it is, the main moving force of the agricultural programme of the country. For stepping up agricultural production it is essential to provide irrigation facilities to the maximum extent, as quickly as possible. While major and medium irrigation projects have to be taken up, wherever possible, in the short run we may have to place greater reliance on an extensive programme of minor irrigation. It is necessary for this purpose to intensify the survey of the water resources—surface, sub-soil and underground—throughout the country. Adequate financial

and material resources should be allocated for a more dynamic and extensive programme of tapping our water resources for irrigation purposes. In this context rural electrification has an added significance. Electric energy should be available on an increasing scale for energising pump sets for lifting water from surface wells and deep tube-wells.

Remunerative Prices to the Producer

Ensuring a remunerative price to the producer and the provision of adequate inputs of fertilisers, improved varieties of seeds, pesticides and credit have become accepted policies of the Government. The Indian National Congress attaches the highest importance to the efficient administration of agricultural research and extension. The closest link should be developed between agriculture and research. The Government should also take early steps for providing insurance of crops and cattle against natural and other calamities.

Credit for Rural Sector

Credit for the rural sector is vital. Today, the moneylender dominates the rural scene in spite of the growth of the cooperative movement. The Indian National Congress recognises that a strong cooperative movement is an important instrument of the socialist transformation of the country-side. For this movement to be effective, exploitation by the vested interests will have to be eliminated. It is primarily for the large body of cooperators to bring about this process of cleansing. It has to be recognised that credit has to be linked with processing and marketing if it is to be truly effective. The Government at the Centre and in the States should increase the tempo of social control over processing and marketing and to link these increasingly with credit.

Amenities in Rural Areas

It is also necessary that certain amenities are made available

in rural areas to landless labour as also others who hold small holdings. House-sites of suitable size should be provided by land acquisition to all such families as require them free of cost in some cases and at concessional rates to others.

Drinking water should be provided in all rural areas by a national programme of wells, conservation of water and utilisation of scientific methods.

An extensive road building programme which will connect villages to the main roads will, apart from providing part employment, promote rural development.

Forest Wealth

India possesses vast manpower and material resources awaiting to be exploited. Adequate attention has not been paid because of various circumstances to the effective use of this manpower and material resources. India has 21 percent of her land under forest. These forests possess abundant resources of timber, wild fruits, medicinal herbs and raw materials for industries. With the assistance of science and technology and with proper organisation and intensive exploitation, forests in India can add to the national product substantially in a matter of years.

Cattle Wealth

India has considerable potential in terms of cattle wealth. What is considered to be a burden today can be converted into an asset and utilised as a means of prosperity if only we develop animal husbandry on modern scientific lines. The breed of cattle, both draught and milch cattle, has to be improved. Proper utilisation of dead cattle by modern scientific processes is of great importance. This will be rich source of hides and skins, manure and other commercial products. Fuller exploitation of these natural resources would greatly add to the health and wealth of the Indian people apart from the vast new avenues of employment they would create.

Backward Classes and Area

Scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other economically under-privileged classes have always been a source of special concern to the Congress. Despite increasing amounts set apart for their welfare, levels of well-being among these communities have not risen appreciably. It should be our special effort to see that in addition to special provision for their welfare they benefit increasingly from the general schemes of development. There is also the problem of the relatively underdeveloped areas in the country. Special attention should be given to their needs in the Fourth Five Year Plan.

National Minimum

It is of the highest importance that the provision of basic needs of every individual is ensured and a national minimum comprising the essential requirements in respect of food, clothing, housing, education and health is established as speedily as possible. The nation should set before itself a goal in this respect and it would be reasonable to expect that the objective will be substantially realised by the end of the Fifth Plan.

Minorities

The way we conducted our struggle for freedom, the provisions in the Constitution of India, the vital implication of democracy and socialism all affirm the basic equality of Indian citizens regardless of their caste, creed or sex.

The essence of the way of life we have adopted is that there is full equality and no discrimination as between one citizen and another. It is India's pride that it is the home of all the important religions of the world. Equal respect for all religions has been one of the distinguished marks of our effort to create a new democratic, socialist society. The Congress must continue to strive diligently for strengthening secular forces so that even the smallest minority in India enjoys a honoured place in the new social order. The Congress would endeavour to see

that any impediment to the enjoyment of equal rights and obligations with other citizens of India is suitably dealt with. We have all by our joint efforts to produce an atmosphere of unity and national integration in which caste or communal distinctions cease to have any importance or relevance.

Prohibition

The Congress policy of prohibition should be maintained and encouraged. In doing so, while efforts are being made to increase its effectiveness, care should be taken to remove the evils that flow from the manner of its implementation.

Population Control

There has been a tremendous increase in population (over 78 million) in the first decade of planning. This was the result of a spectacular fall in death rate which in turn was brought about by our successful fight against disease, famine and pestilence. This has also increased the expectation of life. Progress we achieved in the economic field was largely nullified by this high rate of population growth. Every year we have 10 million new mouths to feed. It is of the utmost importance that we take speedy and effective steps to check population growth.

Administrative Efficiency

The inadequacies in administration have been recognised as an impediment to economic progress. The Government have appointed an 'Administrative Reforms Commission' to go into the whole question of administration, both Central and State, and to make recommendations for a more efficient and more economical administrative set-up. There should be constant efforts to raise the standard of the administration so as to secure the utmost integrity, efficiency and economy.

Foreign Policy

The world has been made familiar with the basic foreign policy of the Congress through its powerful advocacy by the late Jawaharlal Nehru. It is in consonance with the best traditions of India's struggle for freedom and the striving for peace in which all thoughtful people in all parts of the world are engaged in this atomic age. Peaceful co-existence, non-alignment and disarmament are important aspects of this policy of peace and friendship with all countries especially our neighbours. The policy includes abstention from the use or threat of use of force for the settlement of inter-State disputes or against the territorial integrity and political-independence of other States.

India has also been in the forefront of the movement for the liberation of countries still under colonial rule. The Congress Party has consistently supported the campaigns against racial discrimination generally and in particular in South Africa, South West Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Mozambique and Angola.

The Congress Party continues to lend its strong support to the United Nations as an effective instrument of world peace.

Our relations with our neighbours, Ceylon, Nepal and Burma, are cordial and friendly but unfortunately we have not been able to reach understanding with China and Pakistan. While it would be our constant endeavour to do so there can be no slackening in our vigilance to ensure the territorial integrity of India.

Call to the Nation

The difficult times we are passing through are a challenge as well as an opportunity to us. The Congress has a tradition of service and a record of achievements of which the people of India may well be proud. Today the nation expects from the Congress a pledge to serve the people with faith and vigour. The spirit of service and sacrifice, the devoted and dedicated endeavour of Congressmen and the intimate and dynamic contacts with the people which the Congress has built up through

decades will, we trust, help it to play the historic role once again in fulfilling the nation's aspirations.

With humility and confidence the Indian National Congress seeks the mandate of the nation to work for a social order based on freedom and justice which will ensure that every individual has the means and opportunities for a full life and is enabled to make his maximum contribution to the service of the nation.

Fifth General Elections—1971

Lok Sabha and State Assemblies

TEXT OF THE ELECTION MANIFESTO

The people of India are again called upon to elect their representatives. Never before has it been so vital that they take the correct decisions.

The dissolution of the Lok Sabha before it had run its full term of five years is fresh evidence of the faith which we have put in the people and in the working of our democratic institutions. Why did the Congress seek election when it could easily have remained in power for another 14 months? The answer was given in clear terms by the Prime Minister in her broadcast to the nation.

The Congress is concerned not merely with remaining in office but with using that privilege to ensure a better life to the people and to satisfy their aspirations for a just economic and social order. The Congress is convinced that it cannot go ahead with its proclaimed programmes and keep its pledges to the people unless it receives a fresh mandate of confidence from them. Only this can enable it to remove the obstacles in the way of our economic and social progress.

The General Election of 1967 registered the people's impatience with the pace of progress in India. In spite of the many achievements that stood to the credit of the Congress and the people—vast and complex industrial enterprises, agrarian reforms, mass education including expansion of university and technical education and major social reforms and advancements in many other spheres, particularly in science and technology—many vital and important problems remained to be

tackled. Millions continued to live in poverty and backwardness. Justice—social, economic and political—which is the basis of our Constitution remained yet a goal to be fought for and attained. It was not surprising that all this was reflected in the polls of 1967.

After the General Election of 1967, important and far-reaching political developments took place because of the tremendous mass upsurge and awakening. Only a genuine radical programme of economic and social development could meet the challenge of this new situation. It is in this context that the Congress formulated the Ten Point Programme and pledged itself to implement it effectively and speedily.

But these moves by the Congress to accelerate the pace of social and economic reforms aroused the opposition of vested interests and their advocates. Conservative elements inside the Congress organisation who were averse to and afraid of change, reacted sharply. When they became aware of our determination to implement the basic policies and radical programmes which had earlier been decided upon jointly, they left and combined with those who had most bitterly opposed all that the Indian National Congress had stood for and fought for under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

The alliance of reaction, composed of the Syndicate, the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party backed by vested interests, has been brought into being solely to fight against the progressive programmes of the Congress. It is also not surprising that a section of the leadership of the Samyukta Socialist Party should have joined this unprincipled alliance, thus revealing not only their negative and destructive role but also the hollowness of their professed socialism.

With the consolidation of the reactionary forces, we are confronted with the most crucial fight in our post-independence history. But we are determined to press forward with a programme of social change which is being challenged by disruptive and backward looking elements who are clinging to ideas and methods which are obstructing growth and social advance.

At the other end of the political spectrum are the Left extremists, trying to undermine the democratic process through

anarchic violence. Their lawless activities have cost innocent lives of citizens and public property. Their aim is to make orderly and peaceful progress impossible.

Thus the ideologies of both the extreme Left and Right are a serious threat to the country.

The Congress is firmly convinced that the challenges posed by the present critical situation can be met only by the proper and effective implementation of a social and economic programme through democratic processes. The Congress wishes to emphasise that the policies and programmes to which it stands pledged are in accordance with the principles laid down in the Constitution of India.

The Directive Principles of State Policy provide that the "State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political shall inform all the institutions of the national life". (Article 38).

The Directive Principles further declare that the "State shall in particular direct its policies towards securing :

(i) That the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good ;

(ii) That the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment" (Article 39 (b) & (c). And the Constitution specifically enjoins that the State should apply these principles in making laws (Article 37).

However, as a result of certain recent judicial pronouncements, it has become impossible to effectively implement some of the Directive Principles of our Constitution.

The nation's progress cannot be halted. The spirit of democracy demands that the Constitution should enable the fulfilment of the needs and urges of the people. Our Constitution has earlier been amended in the interest of economic development. It will be our endeavour to seek such further constitutional remedies and amendments as are necessary to overcome

the impediment in the path of social justice.

Our efforts to realise these great objectives have been deliberately subjected to misleading and mischievous propaganda. To confuse the minds of the owners of small and medium property holdings, it has been maliciously suggested that the aim of the Congress is to expropriate all private property. This is not the truth.

The Congress wants to make it clear that it has no intention of abolishing the institution of private property. On the other hand, the policy of the Congress is to ensure that the right to property becomes real for the largest number of people. But the Congress is pledged to prevent individual holdings and ownership of property beyond reasonable limits and the concentration of economic power and wealth in a few hands, as this is inconsistent with the concept of Democracy and Social justice.

Public policy has to respond to the requirements of the vast majority of our people. We must call for a mass approach to the basic problems of the people. What has to be recognised in India today is that goals of economic growth and social justice are largely complementary and not competitive. In fact our pursuit of economic growth is likely to be disrupted in the absence of advances in social justice.

The Congress, therefore, comes to the people with its programme for urgent economic development and comprehensive social reforms. Unlike the other parties which enjoy the freedom to make promises that they know they will not be called upon to redeem, the Congress presents its programme after taking meticulous care not to make promises which it is not possible to fulfil.

Agriculture

The great bulk of India's poor consists of the landless and small farmers. Any programme which aims at benefiting them and improving the country's economy must, therefore, have a rural focus. The first item in such a programme must be the speedy development of agriculture. New scientific methods

should be increasingly, consistently and vigorously applied to agriculture which alone will create a vast field for additional employment. We have to ensure that this development secures for the people an adequate and nutritious diet and also leads to agrarian prosperity covering the entire countryside. The fruits of such development should be equitable spread out, particularly to benefit the small and marginal farmers and the landless.

For the spread of new technology, a positive programme of agrarian reform is necessary. Insecurity of tenancies stands in the way of adoption of new technology. In a share-cropping system neither the cultivating tenant nor the non-cultivating owner would make the necessary investments. Uncertain ownership which has arisen out of the non-implementation of existing land laws is a disincentive to proper investments.

The Green Revolution is now confined to irrigated areas and even there many of the small farmers have not been able to adopt new technology. Facilities by way of credit etc. are being extended to small farmers to enable them to adopt scientific agriculture.

Our ground water resources are being carefully surveyed and minor irrigation rapidly extended.

A crash programme for improvement in dry farming areas is being undertaken on the basis of a new technology evolved by our scientists.

In the rural areas there are large numbers of poor people unattached to land. It will be our effort to provide them with new opportunities for gainful employment. Our coming prosperity must be reflected in the every day life of the rural areas. The village must become a better place to live in through the imaginative use of old techniques and the introduction of new productive activities, both linked to the National Market.

After Bank Nationalisation we have embarked upon a new credit programme, by extending credit facilities to small farmers, self employed persons and economically neglected sectors and areas. To serve these needs banking institutions will be suitably restructured.

Industry

Public Sector

As far back as in 1931, the Congress had accepted that in any programme for industrial development the public sector must have a dominant role.

Industries in the public sector are owned by the people. They must be organised and run in such a way as to create resources for further investment. The country, therefore, has the right to demand of management and workers dedicated and disciplined work, in the fruits of which they will have their due share.

A proper wage policy must provide incentives for increased production and the raising of the wage level on the basis of higher productivity.

Modern methods of management must be introduced speedily with emphasis on providing participation of workers in management.

It is against this background that the Congress puts forward its proposals for the expansion of the public sector by taking over General Insurance ; increasing state participation in the import-export trade ; greater role of the state in industries where substantial public funds have been invested ; and expansion of the activities of the Food Corporation of India, coordinated with cooperatives, which can ensure the implementation of a national policy for the distribution of food and fair prices for the farmer.

Private Sector

In our economy the private sector occupy an important position. It should function in a manner that is consistent with our social objectives.

Our regulations are not meant to stifle private enterprise but to make it more broad-based and to open out opportunities for new entrepreneurs, and also to spread it to the backward areas.

To enable the private sector to make its legitimate contribution to the growth of national income and employment it will be our effort to simplify regulations and avoid delays. The private sector will be stimulated to the maximum extent possible without allowing the emergence of private monopolies and concentration of wealth and economic power.

Small industry has to be the growth point. Its development will ensure the achievement of our objectives of promoting industrial expansion, ensuring wider participation in the economic process and diversifying private enterprise.

No realistic wage and price policy can work unless it is integrated with a rational wealth and income policy. The Congress will formulate and implement such a policy.

Ceiling on Urban Property

Limitations must be imposed on urban property. Measures will be taken to curb anti-social racketeering in the purchase and sale of urban land.

Employment

The Congress is gravely concerned with the hardship caused to our people by prevailing unemployment. Conscious of this problem, the Congress had given due importance to this aspect in our planning. But, for an effective employment programme, a minimum economic base is essential. So we gave priority to the building up of this base. On the food front also we are in a better position today in view of the breakthrough in agriculture and the possibility of accelerating food production. Therefore, we are now in a position to undertake an integrated National Works Programme. These works should be such as would create physical assets and provide the infrastructure for the further growth of our economy.

The needs of public construction in villages, towns and cities are varied and enormous. In the villages, there is pressing need for irrigation channels, bunds, drains, land consolidation and land levelling. Between the villages and rural marketing centres there is need for more and better roads. Rural

centres need grain storage, marketing facilities, schools, health and family planning facilities.

Towns have gaping infra-structure deficiencies. Big cities need general urban development and a large number of houses. Transport facilities have to be considerably increased and modernised and made accessible to the largest possible number of urban dwellers. The national highway system needs further development.

If these are taken up on a planned basis, there need not be any shortage of public construction projects with high social returns. These programmes will require the services of skilled and unskilled labour and trained engineers and technicians. A crash programme for employment is ready to be launched in a few weeks throughout the country, as the nucleus of a larger and more comprehensive programme. Cheap credit would be made available for self-employment. Only a massive programme of this nature will make a real contribution to the solution of the unemployment problem in India.

Education and Child Welfare

Children are the wealth of the nation and their welfare is an essential investment in economic, social and cultural development. It has been known for many years now that protein malnutrition is an important cause of infant mortality, stunted growth, low work output, premature ageing and reduced life-span. The Congress has, therefore, accepted the provision of adequate nutrition to the pre-school children to improve the quality of the coming generation as an important national programme. The year 1970-71 marks a beginning in providing this service to pre-school children belonging to the vulnerable sections. The Congress is determined to enlarge this programme to cover all pre-school children.

The spread of universal elementary education is closely linked with this child welfare programme. Despite great increase in primary education, it must be admitted that progress has not been adequate. An expanded programme of primary education is justified on economic as well as egalitarian considerations. Such a programme would also provide jobs for the

educated unemployed on a large scale.

The Congress believes that the basic objective of any system of education must be to develop a self-reliant and integrated personality. Reorganisation of our educational system is essential to achieve economic growth at a speed that ensures general improvement in the standard of living. We must also expand scientific and technical education and relate it to the needs of our agricultural and industrial programmes. Educational facilities must be linked with employment opportunities. This is one of the ways to harness the creativity of youth and commit it to the future.

Science and Technology

The development of science and technology is of critical importance in ensuring national security, strengthening and diversifying the industrial base, transforming the rural economy and generally improving the quality of life of our people.

The Congress will prepare a national scientific and technological plan which will be integrated with our economic plan. A major part of our scientific and technological resources should be concentrated on a small number of high priority areas which would be specially identified.

A ten year profile for atomic energy and space research has already been drawn up. We shall now take up vigorous implementation of a viable programme derived from such a profile and based on maximum self-sufficiency.

The Congress invites the nation's scientists and technologists to give their best to accomplish these exciting tasks of momentous importance and assures them that it would be its constant endeavour not only to accord them positions of standing and responsibility but involve them intimately in the processes by which governmental decisions are taken and implemented.

Housing

Growing urbanisation is creating new problems causing, serious shortage of housing. The Congress is committed to

undertake a large-scale housing programme with special reference to the needs of the lower and the middle income groups. Slum clearance and provision of proper housing for slum-dwellers will have a high priority.

The Congress is also pledged to provide house sites free of cost to the landless in the rural areas and undertake measures to improve rural housing.

Minorities

In keeping with its past traditions, the Congress is pledged to protect the rights and interests of all minorities.

The dark and evil forces of Right reaction which masquerade in a variety of forms are intent upon destroying the very base of our democratic and socialist objectives. They are attempting to consolidate their position. They exploit some of the genuine grievances of the people and arouse the emotions of various sections by preaching religious fanaticism, racial supremacy and chauvinism. History records that fascist forces always emerge through such nefarious manoeuvres. The Congress is determined that this shall not happen in our country. And for this purpose, it will take effective measures in all fields, including education at all its stages.

The Constitution lays down that the State and local authorities should provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups. It shall be our endeavour to implement this.

Secularism is one of the basic tenets of our Constitution. In accordance with this Constitutional imperative, the Congress will strive to ensure that all minorities have full freedom to establish, manage and run educational and other institutions.

The Congress will strive to ensure the democratic functioning and protect the autonomous character of educational institutions including those established at the instance of and for the benefit of minorities.

The Congress is fully alive to the need for encouraging literary pursuits in different languages. In this context, Urdu shall

be given its due place which has been denied to it so far.

The Congress will make every effort to prevent discrimination against minorities in the matter of recruitment in services.

The Congress is pledged to promote with special care the educational, employment and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people particularly the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and the Backward Classes. Urgent attention must also be given to the socio-economic problems faced by Muslims, Christians and other religious and linguistic minorities who have not had equal opportunities.

Foreign Policy

For the last twenty-four years, India has raised her voice in the councils of the world to promote peace and fight the remnants of colonialism and all concepts of racial inequality. The Congress pledges itself to remain faithful to the vision of Jawaharlal Nehru who gave inspiration, and direction to our foreign policy which is in India's own national interest and has helped to safeguard its sovereignty, security and independence. The Congress pledges to uphold the principles of non-alignment and freedom from military blocs. This has received ever-widening acceptance in the world and more specially amongst the newly independent nations.

Consistent with our policy, the Congress will continue to develop and consolidate friendly relations with all countries and more specially with our neighbours.

It will be our constant endeavour to normalise relations with Pakistan as we believe that our two peoples, who have so much in common, desire to live as peaceful friendly neighbours.

It shall also be our endeavour to normalise relations with China on the basis of mutual respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

We rely upon the patriotism of our people, their capacity for self-sacrifice, the strength of our economy and loyalty, devotion and strength of our defence forces which we shall continue to strengthen.

Strong and Stable Government

To carry out the entire programmes a strong and stable Government committed to radical policies backed by a decisive majority in Parliament is absolutely essential. Our Congress alone can provide such a Government and ensure effective implementation of programmes. In this election we must think only of the nation and its advance.

The Congress, therefore, appeals to the people to return its candidates to the Lok Sabha and thus give it a clear mandate to :

i. continue the advance to socialism through democratic process and devise administrative system capable of speeding implementations ;

ii. put down the forces of violence and disorder so that all our citizens can live in peace and harmony ;

iii. defend secularism and safeguard the interests of the minorities and the weaker sections of the community, particularly the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the other backward sections so that they may attain "equality of status and opportunity and fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual" ;

iv. end anachronistic privileges such as privy purses etc. and reduce glaring disparities of income and opportunity ;

v. accelerate efforts to provide basic requirements to our people by undertaking a dynamic programme of agricultural development by the application of science and technology and thereby usher in a new phase of rural prosperity, which will improve the condition of small farmers, farmers in dry areas, the landless, artisans and others who eke out their existence through diverse skills ;

vi. provide fresh avenues of employment and thus widen the participation of our citizens in nation-building activities ;

vii. enlarge the role of the public sector and improve its performance ;

viii. give scope to the private sector to play its proper role in the economy, while curbing the concentration of economic

power and wealth ;

ix. control prices and ensure to the people the supplies of essential commodities at reasonable rates ;

x. launch upon a programme of child welfare to provide nutritious diet to pre-school children ;

xi. provide elementary education to all children and reshape secondary and higher education to suit the needs of the country ; and

xii. for these purposes, to effect such amendments of the Constitution as may be necessary.

The Congress is the only party which can place its programme before the people with a sense of responsibility. The Congress pledges itself anew to these challenging tasks to a social revolution which is peaceful and democratic and embraces all our people and permeates all spheres of national life. The Congress is the only party which has the capacity to achieve such a social revolution.

The people have the power. They are now called upon to choose the programme and the party which can best serve their interests. We appeal to the people once again to give us their mandate.

Poverty must go. Disparity must diminish. Injustice must end. These are but essential steps towards our ultimate goal—the goal of an India which is united and strong, an India which lives up to its ancient and enduring ideals, yet is modern in thought and achievement, meeting the future with vision and confidence.

Assemblies Elections—1972

TEXT OF THE ELECTION MANIFESTO

We have passed through one of the most momentous years in the history of our great nation.

Our Fifth General Election to Parliament was held in 1971. The Indian National Congress appealed to the people to vote for a strong and stable government at the centre to wage a sustained and determined battle against poverty and inequality. Our people gave to the Indian National Congress overwhelming support and mandate. The wisdom of our people in ensuring such a Government was demonstrated by the manner in which the Government and people together met an unprecedented crisis in our history which began on March 25, 1971, when the military junta of Pakistan sought to suppress the revolt of the people in Bangla Desh through terror and torture.

Now the Indian National Congress once again appeals to the people of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mysore, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tripura and West Bengal to give careful consideration to the exercise of their valuable right to franchise. The progress of our country demands a strong and stable government not only at the centre but equally strong and stable governments in the states. At present there is no other political party which can provide governments at the centre and in the states. Unless the fundamental tenets of our national being, namely, socialism, secularism and democracy animate the policies of the states and central governments. Our overall progress and social change will be hampered. The Congress, therefore,

appeals once again to the people to vote for Congress candidates in the states which are being to the poll and thus ensure a cooperative and harmonious functioning of the Indian federal system in order to complete our social revolution through democratic methods.

In asking our people for a mandate to form Congress governments in the states concerned, the Congress submits for scrutiny not merely our promises but also our performance, more specially after the party has gone through a process of transformation under the inspiring leadership of our Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi.

Pledges Redeemed

Every Governments and people are tested in times of crisis and more severely in times of war. It is not necessary to recapitulate all the horrors which were let loose in Bangla Desh. Nor is it necessary to describe the tremendous burdens which were imposed upon us. Never before in human history had as many as 10 million people suddenly come to another country to seek refuge in so short a time. During this crisis many anxious voices were raised asking if the refugees could ever return and whether it would not have been cheaper to go to war in March or April than to feed and clothe these victims of oppression. Political parties appearing to be ultra patriotic demanded action. Others not advoting war demanded instant recognition of Bangla Desh. The Union Government of the Congress under the leaderships of Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi, was not swept off its feet by the magnitude of the task, by counsel of despair or by demands of impetuous action. But our sympathy and support were solemnly pledged to the struggling people of Bangla Desh and an assurance given that the refugees would return.

The world knows now that the broad strategy adopted, inspired by wisdom and deep understanding of the great issues involved, achieved success. The combination of patience and decisiveness and the timing of every key move have been widely acclaimed. No step was taken a day too soon or too late.

The highest degree of statesmanship was required to withstand and frustrate international and domestic pressures and to disprove the propaganda that India had any expansionist designs. Any precipitate action would not only have led to greater complications but also have damaged the country's high reputation as a champion of freedom, justice and peace. The party dismisses the theory advanced by some groups that the same results could have been achieved sooner and at less cost.

The Congress salutes the armed forces and para military detachments for their valour and determination. It acclaims the entire Indian people for their unity and sense of dedication. It pays homage to those who made the final sacrifice for our country and our ideals and to those who have been disabled during this war.

The world today acknowledge that Bangla Desh is a reality. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of nation, has returned to his people. The refugees are returning to their homes. We can now turn, once again, to our principal concerns, namely, the tasks which the Congress had set out in its Election Manifesto of 1971.

Even in the midst of great upheaval and the burdens it imposed upon our country, the Congress did not neglect some of most important of the promises which the party had made in 1971.

By the 24th Amendment, the power of Parliament to amend any part of the Constitution has been restored. The Directive Principles enjoin that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community should be so distributed as best subserve the common good and that the working of the economic system should not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment. By the 25th Amendment, these principles have been given their due position. The needs of the masses have been put above those of the privileged few.

The 26th Amendment redeems the pledge to abolish Privy Purses and Princely Privileges, thereby ending an outdated and anachronistic system.

We promised to take over general Insurance; this has been

done. We emphasised that the Public Sector would be extended in those areas where state ownership is vital and our taking over of the coking coal mines and of certain areas of foreign trade are steps in that direction.

We promised to concentrate on the speedy development of agriculture. The production of foodgrains reaching 108 million tonnes has enabled us to stop the import of cereals.

Special attention is being paid to improve the working of the Public Sector with emphasis on modern methods of management, participation of workers, and indigenous research and development.

In pursuance of the pledge given by the Congress a year ago, the National Committee for Science and Technology, composed of some of the foremost scientists in the country, has been set up. This high level body is preparing a national scientific and technological plan which will be integrated with our economic plan.

The record of the Government has amply justified the confidence reposed in the party by the people. The objectives to which the party pledged itself in the Election Manifesto of 1971 remain valid today. In the past year, several initiatives have been taken which need to be pursued vigorously in the months to come. But recent political developments, which have changed the history of our sub-continent, impose new challenges that call for clarification of the priorities in our political and economic endeavours.

The Elections to state legislatures provide further opportunity to endorse the policies and programmes pursued by the Prime Minister and the central government. By bringing to power state governments headed by the Congress, the people will be strengthening the hand of the Prime Minister and the central government, enabling the closest cooperation between the centre and the states.

Towards the Future

The Congress party remains fully committed to every detail of the programme but before the people in its Election

Manifesto of 1971. In addition, the Congress must honestly and sincerely place before the people certain imperatives which must govern our national effort not only in the immediate future but in the longer perspective.

Self-reliance has been the objective of our plans of development since 1951. Today it assumes prime urgency. Fortunately, we are in a position to achieve self-reliance, provided we put in that extra effort which national interest demands. The Congress and the union government are determined to make genuine self-reliance a reality. While we shall not deny ourselves such friendly assistance as will enable us to strengthen critical sectors of the economy, we shall redraw our economic programmes and mobilise our material and intellectual resources as to be able to do without foreign aid.

To achieve economic independence, we have to undertake a number of measures with utmost urgency. First of all, we have to remove the inefficiencies in our economy which have resulted in the existence of idle capacities in important sectors of the economy, such as steel, fertilisers and others. Secondly, we must restructure our production pattern with the greatest emphasis on essential consumer goods and investment goods which are necessary for generating employment and for the defence of the country.

In order to achieve these objectives, we must mobilise more resources. This will mean curtailment of consumption by those strata of society who have benefited most from the social investment that has already been carried out. It is not enough to have more savings; it is necessary that some of these savings should accrue to the Public Sector. That will also help to create public property on a greater scale and hasten the transition to a socialist society.

There should be a more harmonious pattern of work between labour and management. This introduction of modern methods of management must be expedited with emphasis on participation of workers in management at every level in the production process.

Progress towards self-reliance must be accompanied by greater efforts to reduce social and economic inequalities. The

social order in rural areas. The Centre has taken the lead in the formulation of a national policy on legislation on land ceilings. The Central Land Reforms Committee, with which Chief Minister of a number of states were associated, has spelt out some specific directions in the existing legislation on land ceilings should be modified. Ceiling should be applicable for the family as a whole, the term 'family' being defined so as to include husband, wife and minor children. Where the number of members in the family exceeds five, additional land may be allowed for each member in excess of five in such a manner that the total area admissible to the family does not exceed twice the ceiling limit for a family. The ceiling for a family of five members may be fixed within the range of 10 to 18 acres of perennially irrigated land or irrigated land capable of growing two crops. For other categories of land, conversion ratios should be fixed, taking into account availability of water, productivity, soil classification, crops grown etc. There should also be an absolute ceiling for a family of five. Exemptions in the existing laws in favour of mechanised farms, well-managed farms etc. need to be reviewed. Other exemptions in favour of plantations of tea, coffee, cardamom, rubber etc. will be carefully examined. The centre has imparted an impetus to land reforms in the states through the legislation it has enacted for West Bengal when the state came under President's rule. The progressive features of this legislation need to be adopted more widely.

In matters relating to land reforms, the mere passing of legislation is not enough. The Congress party will lead its organisational support to the government in carrying out the reforms at the grassroot level.

The coming into force of the 25th Constitutional Amendment will clear the way for the imposition of ceiling on the ownership of urban property based on the family as a unit. Effective measures will also be taken to prevent racketeering in the purchase and sale of urban lands.

The Congress is committed to undertake an integrated development programme, which has to include a housing programme providing tenements, particularly for the poorer

sections of society and public servants, provision of adequate transport facility, power, water supply and public sanitation.

The interests of the minorities will continue to be safeguarded in accordance with the complete and unswerving devotion of the Congress to the tenets of secularism and democracy. This involves :

(a) Facilities for education at the primary stage to all linguistic groups ;

(b) Attention to socio-economic problems faced by Muslims, Christians and other religious and linguistic minorities ;

(c) Giving Urdu its due place by expediting the work of high-power committee set up by the Central Government to advise on steps to be taken for this purpose, provision of greater and adequate funds and arrangements for its teaching in central and other schools where there is sufficient demand ;

(d) Every effort will be made to prevent discrimination against minorities in the matter of recruitment and promotions in services ; and

(e) Special care will be taken to promote the education, employment and welfare of the weaker sections of society, particularly the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and the backward classes.

The new imperative of economic self-reliance gives special urgency to increase the tempo of execution of these vital programmes at state level. The need to raise the rate of domestic savings and investment in turn entails that the states should pull their full weight in mobilising material and human resources and observe the utmost discipline in the management of the resources mobilised.

All this underlines the need for strong, stable and progressive governments in the states, fully committed to the Congress ideals of economic growth and social justice, of dynamic and democratic change. The emergence of a strong and stable Central Government as a result of the 1971 General Election enabled the nation to face external challenges. The need now is for strong and stable governments in the states so that centre and states can together carry the war against poverty and the

drive towards "Purna Arthik Swaraj" to a successful conclusion.

The Congress is committed to achieve the objectives outlined above and in its Manifesto of 1971. It places the following in the forefront of its programme :

Deeply conscious of the debt owed by the country to the Jawans and officers, Congress will take all necessary steps to mitigate the sufferings of the disabled and of the dependents of those who laid down their lives.

The people of border areas have shown great heroism and solidarity in the face of untold hardships and sufferings, including sacrifice of life. All assistance will be afforded to them and their families to resume normal life.

The commitments of the Congress to the minorities will be firmly implemented.

The interests of the weaker sections of society, particularly the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and the backward classes will be given special attention.

All those below the level of subsistence today—particularly in rural areas—will be helped to improve their income, by land reform, improvement of agricultural techniques and by provision of subsidiary occupations.

Land reforms based on the principles already outlined will be carried through and in the towns and cities, and urban ceiling will be enforced.

The drive to spread knowledge will be given a new dynamism—with compulsory school education for every child upto the age of 11 by 1975 and upto the age of 14 by 1980.

Unemployment has become a scourge. A massive integrated programme for land and village development will be organised to provide employment for millions, particularly landless labour.

Conditions will be created to put to national use engineering and scientific talent. A country-wide effort will be made to deploy other trained personnel, particularly in the fields of education, administration and trade.

Steps will be taken to establish a gigantic national water

grid by link-up of all our major rivers from the Ganga in the north to the Cauvery in the south. This will enable the most beneficial use of the nation's water resources and add a new dimension to our communication network. The mingling of these waters will open up new and exciting vistas.

Our Foreign Policy

Our foreign policy reflects commitment to democracy, secularism and follows Jawaharlal Nehru's concept of non-alignment. The basic element of that policy is the maintenance of our own independent judgement in each instance in accordance with the merits of each case and our own national interests. That we have been able to assist in the emergence of a secular, socialist and democratic Bangla Desh is in itself a tribute to the principles to which we have adhered. By continuing to adhere to those principles, we hope to help our region and the world at large in the maintenance of peace and the expansion of areas of international cooperation.

During period of trial through which we have recently passed, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries as well as some Asian and African Latin American and European countries, notably UK and France, have helped us in different ways. Our relations with Soviet Union have been further strengthened and consolidated by the Treaty of peace, Friendship and Co-operation which we signed with them.

As long as economic self-reliance is not achieved, it is likely that attempts will be made in the realm of international relations to exploit any weaknesses. In the past, we have been able to resist and frustrate such pressures by summoning every ounce of our will and energy. Self reliance is the economic counterpart of political independence and its achievement will deter other powers from the temptation of attempting to put pressure on us.

We are determined that India's might and size shall not become a cause of apprehension to any of our neighbours. We are pledged not to interfere in the internal affairs of our neighbours in any way but to live with all countries in a spirit of

co-existence, equality and mutual respect. We reject not only great power chauvinism but also the doctrines of spheres of influence and balance of power.

To new state of Bangla Desh, born out of sacrifice and dedication to freedom, we offer friendship and cooperation. We say to the people of Pakistan that India wishes to live in peace and amity with them. Peace and security can be achieved only through cooperation and not through confrontation. All the nations of our region have one supreme challenge, the eradication of poverty. Let us work together to conquer this common enemy.

Our admiration for heroic people of North Vietnam in their long struggle has been re-emphasized by our recent decision to establish closer diplomatic ties between our two countries.

During last months, certain countries have chosen to remain indifferent to the cause of human justice involved in the struggle of the people of Bangla Desh. But it is our earnest hope that these governments will soon recognise the realities. The people of India greatly appreciate the sympathy and support given by the freedom loving peoples of the world and the international news media.

Conclusion

The struggle of the people of Bangla Desh and response of the government and people of India under the leadership of Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the victory of our armed forces and our para-military forces and the sacrifices made by them, once again underline the soundness of the principles of democracy, secularism and socialism which have animated the Indian National Congress during the national freedom struggle. Today these principles provide the only basis for consolidating our freedom, our democracy and our economic future.

The Congress is the only party which can place its programme before the people with a sense of responsibility. It is the only party which can give a unified lead to the country by establishing strong and effective governments in the states and at the centre which are committed to implement this far-reaching

socio-economic programme, aimed to restructure our economy on the basis of self-reliance.

The Congress pledges itself anew to these challenging tasks, to a socialist revolution which is peaceful and democratic and embraces all our people and permeates all spheres of national life. The Congress is the only party which has the capacity to achieve such a social revolution.

The people have the power. In March 1971, they used it to reject the reactionaries and communalists of the right and the extremists, who resort to violence and disorder and try to disrupt the forces of progress in the garb of left slogans. Now the people are called upon once again to choose and again we appeal to the people to give us their mandate.

We reiterate our objective : Poverty must go. Disparity must diminish. Injustice must end. These are but essential steps towards ultimate goal—the goal of an India which is united and strong, an India which is living up to its ancient and enduring ideals, yet is modern in thought and achievement, meeting the future with vision and confidence.

Sixth General Elections—1977

Lok Sabha Poll

TEXT OF THE ELECTION MANIFESTO

Through every crucial stage of the history of India in the twentieth century and in each momentous crisis which the nation has faced, the Indian National Congress has provided great and inspiring leadership through such illustrious figures as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Abul Kalam Azad, Rajendra Prasad and Subhash Chandra Bose. It has provided bold initiatives and unflinching dedication and service to the people at all times. The Indian National Congress has always been a party of the masses, a party of the people, a party in the vanguard of progress, wedded to the cause of the poor.

The Indian National Congress was the first to question the right of an alien authority to rule over India, first to voice the people's yearning for liberty, first to launch the struggle for freedom, first to oppose communalism and espouse the ideal of secularism, first pledge the nation to democracy, first to resolve to end poverty, first to fight for economic and social justice, first to adopt socialism as a national goal and first to lead the country from backwardness into the modern age.

Through three decades of freedom, the Indian National Congress has stood steadfast by the ideals that inspired the liberation struggle and to the principles that have activated the Indian Revolution. It has resolutely rebuffed every attempt made, internally and externally, to undermine and undo the great purposes of the nation. It has squarely faced the latest desperate attack made upon the people. Despite the continuing

threat, Congress, with undiminished faith in the people, calls upon all citizens to give it a clear and unequivocal mandate to carry the nation forward unitedly to peace, progress and prosperity through democracy, secularism and socialism, safeguarding the integrity of the nation.

The record of the Indian National Congress in the years of freedom has been steadily to enlarge the power of the people. Democratic institutions have been built and nurtured. In the policy and decision making processes the voice of the people has been made supreme. Spectacular progress has been made in agriculture and industry, in science, education and public health. In many areas our scientific and technological competence is comparable to that of the foremost industrialised countries. Today we have the third largest technical manpower in the world. Backward regions have been opened up and new opportunities brought to disabled sections, especially Harijans, tribals and backward classes oppressed by centuries of discrimination. We are now in a position to launch a successful attack on age-long poverty. India is one of the few countries in the world which has set up specific and daring social and economic targets in the face of unimaginable odds. Recent months have shown that the political capacity and economic strength so built by the Indian National Congress can be put to the greatest advantage of the people through self-confident, self-reliant, disciplined and dedicated functioning.

In the 1971 election, the people reiterated their faith in the Congress ideals of democracy, secularism and socialism. The Congress manifesto had promised to continue the advance to socialism, to subdue the forces of violence and disorder, to safeguard the interests of the minorities and weaker sections, to end privy purses and other such privileges, to provide the basic requirements of the people speedily through dynamic rural programmes, to provide new employment avenues, to enlarge the role and efficiency of the public sector, to give proper scope to the private sector to play a national role without concentration of economic power, to control prices and ensure supplies of essential commodities, to launch a vigorous programme of child welfare, to expand and improve education

and, for these purposes, to amend the Constitution stability.

Congress has redeemed these promises in substantial measure, thanks to its firm, resolute the farsighted leadership and the will of the people. This has been done in the face of the heavy burden, dislocation and distraction caused by the crisis in Bangladesh and the ensuing war forced upon the country in 1971, the international economic crisis since 1971, the severe droughts of 1972 and 1973, and the attempts by the opposition parties to obstruct and subvert Government and our democratic institutions.

Most of the parties which have now entered into alliances or adjustments against the Congress had in 1971 combined under name of the Grand Alliance. These parties wedded to communalism, reaction or left extremism had different and even conflicting ideologies and programmes. They united only to oppose the progressive policies of the Congress. Spurned by the people in the Parliamentary elections of 1971 and the state elections of 1972, and alarmed and enraged by the various progressive measures of the Government, certain opposition parties took to extra-constitutional agitation. In 1973 and 1974 these parties exploiting economic difficulties and the impact of global inflation, stirred up discontent to bring about the dissolution of elected legislative assemblies. In the name of democracy, but in collusion with anti-social elements, they sought to negate the working of democracy. By resorting to force, duress and brutal violence, duly elected governments were not allowed to function.

In this surcharged atmosphere, certain opposition leaders went to the length of inciting the armed forces to mutiny and the police and government officials to rebel. Forces of disintegration were unleashed and communal passions were roused threatening the very unity and integrity of the country. No government could have stood by and allowed the country's stability and integrity to be so imperilled.

Freedom does not include the licence to undermine national interests. But the aim of these opposition parties was to paralyse national activity and the Government itself and to usurp power by unconstitutional means. The Constitution-makers;

envisaging precisely such internal disorders, had provided for the declaration of an emergency under the Constitution. No option was left but to declare an emergency when such a situation did arise. This timely and necessary measure was ratified by Parliament. It saved the Republic from catastrophe and restored political stability.

Today with order and discipline restored, dynamic and mutually reinforcing socio-economic programmes are being carried out, namely, the Fifth Plan which envisages an investment of about Rs. 20,000 crores in the last two years of the Plan, the Twenty-Point Programme and the Five-Point Programme.

The new economic programme has contained and reversed inflation, an unparalleled achievement in the world. While a large number of countries are still struggling with the problem of inflation, India has succeeded, through bold and firm measures, in combating it. India is the only country where the price level today is lower than it was in October, 1974. Among the many advantages of the successful anti-inflationary campaign, one has been to prevent the erosion of the earnings of the middle class with fixed incomes. Price rises were checked through increased production resulting from the hard work of our farmers, industrial workers and technologists. Vigorous, stringent and effective fiscal and monetary anti-inflationary measures taken up by the Government contributed further to controlling prices. These measures included a crackdown on economic offenders such as blackmarketeers, profiteers, smugglers and foreign exchange racketeers. Congress promises relentlessly to continue the drive against such economic offenders.

Last year food production reached an all-time record of 120 million tonnes, the growth rate of industrial production was 5.7 per cent and the gross national income went up by more than 6.5 per cent. The current year is expected to see a doubling of the rate of industrial production. There has also been a striking improvement in power plant operations and in production in various sectors including coal, steel and fertilizers. We have made a major breakthrough in finding our own oil. The potential of Bombay High and adjoining areas have been firmly established and commercial production has begun, a great and

proud achievement for our technologists.

Under the Twenty-Point Programme we are recognising both agrarian and urban economies to ensure a higher growth rate with greater social justice. Vigorous steps have been taken to carry out programmes of land reforms, to distribute house-sites, to liquidate rural indebtedness, to abolish bonded labour, to enforce minimum wages for agricultural labourers and to ease the conditions of farm workers. These programmes will be pressed forward with even greater vigour.

We are maintaining the closest vigil on prices. We are taking steps to bring them down in essential commodities. The public distribution system is being strengthened. We shall further expand programmes to reinforce the handloom industry and to bring high quality controlled cloth to the people. We have already ensured that students get a larger supply of essential commodities at controlled prices in hostels. Text-books and exercise books are also now more readily available to students generally. Book banks have been opened to help the poorer students. This programme will be greatly expanded.

Conspicuous luxury in building activities has been curbed and housing construction for the low-income and middle income groups is being stimulated. Wherever possible people living in slums will be rehoused in clean and wholesome surroundings. A vigorous drive for slum improvement will be carried out at the same time. Congress is committed to the planned development of towns and cities. It will encourage the Habitat Movement, take up a massive programme for urban renewal and adopt measures to prevent pollution, preserve the natural environment and encourage the conservation movement. The middle classes, particularly in the urban areas, have their own difficulties and problems and Congress will give urgent attention to solve them. Already they have had income-tax relief, lower priced essential goods made more easily available and banking credit facilities.

The problem in liquidating poverty is mainly linked with population growth. It would be unwise to allow our planned development efforts to be wiped out by a population explosion. But, the Congress categorically states that there cannot be and

will not be any compulsion in the family planning movement. It will be a voluntary movement and it will be a people's movement. The movement can succeed only by educating and persuading the people, and popularising the benefits of a small family. This is the main thrust behind the adoption of the National Population Policy, which has been hailed at home and abroad as a far-sighted and comprehensive measure.

The Congress has always attached the highest importance to removing the social disabilities of the Scheduled Castes and improving their economic conditions. The Protection of Civil Rights Act 1976 provides enhanced punishment for preaching and practising untouchability in any form. Special steps have been taken to advance the interests of Harijans in allotting land, hostel facilities, drinking water supply, credit and legal aid. Similarly special programmes for Scheduled Tribes, sub-plans for tribal areas, intensive tribal development blocks, and hill areas programmes, have been implemented. Congress will continue its crusade against the remnants of untouchability and work unremittingly to raise the living standard and social status of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Any discrimination is wholly repugnant to the vision of a free and equal society bestowed on us by our leaders—Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

• Women have been in the forefront of the national struggle and they have held pre-eminent positions in free India. Congress is committed to enlarging the equality of opportunity for women in all walks of life, political, educational, economic and cultural. Accordingly, we shall work intensively to remove every form of economic and social discrimination against them and to end the crippling and outmoded dowry system which brings untold suffering in its wake. Congress pledges to ensure that Indian women enjoy dignity and equality so that they can make their due contribution for building a strong and prosperous India.

Youth are the single largest repository of the nation's power. Our programmes have attracted youth who are enthusiastically participating in developmental and nation-building activities. Congress will promote all activities which channel

their creative and constructive energy. It will widen the scope of the National Service Scheme and substantially expand programmes for physical education, games, sports and cultural activities for youth. Congress stands for a forward looking society in which the abilities of youth are encouraged.

The Congress is pledged to protect the rights of minorities. Its commitment to secularism is irrevocable. Respect for all religious and equal opportunities for all to pursue their faith is guaranteed. All minorities will have the continued freedom to establish, manage and run their educational and other institutions. Every effort will be made to prevent discrimination in service recruitment. Congress will also pay special attention to the socio-economic and educational problems faced by Muslims, Christians, Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs, Parsis and other religious and linguistic minorities. It will encourage literacy pursuits of the minorities in their own languages. In this context the development of Urdu will receive the special consideration that is richly deserves.

Congress will continue to give high priority to the growth and development of industries so that India can rapidly take its place among the advanced nations of the world and reap the fruits of the scientific and technological revolution. Efficient management in the economy, specially in the last two years, has led to a comfortable balance of payment, an excellent export performance, a record accumulation of over Rs. 2,500 crores in foreign exchange reserves, industrial peace, a large reservoir of technological and scientific manpower, and business confidence. This has enhanced the country's prestige in the world community. Congress is determined that the nation should continue to derive full benefits from these favourable factors. To stimulate industrial production, Congress will fully utilise existing capacities, create new capacities and improve productivity. It will take steps to bring sick mills which are otherwise viable back to health. It will also try to introduce modern and scientific methods of management in industries.

Workers' participation in industries is one of the cardinal aims of the Congress. We regard the participation of workers

in the production and management processes to be vital to improve industrial relations and industrial productivity, and will ensure that such participation is steadily enlarged. Congress will not tolerate retrenchments, lock-outs closures and lay-offs which harm the economy of the nation. It will take all steps to preserve the interests of the working class.

Shortage of housing is a major problem for workers. To provide them with suitable accommodation, Congress will launch a special national Housing Fund to which employers and employees will contribute. Congress promises training programmes for dedicated and promising workers to enable them to move up to higher responsibilities.

Reforms in economic administrative begun in 1974 will be carried forward so that the public sector can play a leading role in national development with higher production and expanded services. Small and middle entrepreneurs will get integrated consultancy. Financial and technological services to enable them to play a more significant role in the national economy.

Congress is irrevocably committed to land reforms leading to peasant ownership. Such reforms are being put through rapidly in all states. Along with ownership, small farmers will need to derive maximum returns from their lands and so contribute to national progress. To enable this, agricultural and rural credit, procedures will be simplified so that farmers can get easier credit, supplies and services without undue difficulty. An agricultural Development Bank of India will be established to meet credit requirements and to coordinate the work of co-operative institutions, rural banks, commercial banks in rural areas, farmers' service societies and extension agencies.

Remunerative prices are a major element in the strategy to raise agricultural productivity. Government's procurement programme for wheat and rice last year played a major role in preventing a slump in agricultural prices and farm incomes. It is necessary to draw up more effective programmes to procure raw cotton and vegetable oils. For all major agricultural commodities, a buffer stock mechanism has to be established to ensure remunerative prices, increased production and supply.

For this purpose a Commodity Stabilisation Corporation to operate in the market for all principal crops will be taken up.

In the countryside, Congress will see that benefits of development go down to the grassroots level by creating greater employment opportunities. This can only be done by increasing production and productivity in agriculture and the sectors allied to it. Therefore, extensive programmes will be launched for the small and marginal farmers, rural artisans, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and backward communities, we shall also place great stress on programmes of minor irrigation, intensive cultivation, command area development, improvement of dry land farming areas, soil conservation, assistance to drought prone areas, expansion of poultry, animal husbandry and fisheries, development of small industries and rural handicrafts. The minimum needs programme, specially for drinking water and maternal-child health services will be expanded. Provision of fertilisers and improved seeds will be a major activity.

Congress will endeavour to transfer technology to the undeveloped rural sector and to give preference to such technology as will help eradicate poverty and refuse the drudgery to which the rural population, specially women, are subjected. Our aim will be to bring science nearer to the people and particularly to the villages. We intend to bring creators of technology in closer contact with its users. Congress also attaches special importance to applying science to agriculture, mining, metallurgy, heavy engineering, power, chemicals, atomic energy, space and health, so that its benefits are spread evenly in the community. Equal emphasis will be given to basic theoretical work in science. The questing spirit of investigating scientists will find full scope for creative endeavour in India which Congress is building.

Considerable investment will continue to be made to strengthen our extensive infra structure in power, transport and communications. Transport facilities will be expanded and improved, and more marketing centres set up. The public construction programme will be enlarged, effective measures will be taken substantially to increase self-employment opportunities

for the urban unemployed facilities from Government and financial institutions will go to the educated unemployed and medium entrepreneurs.

Education, expansion of health and medical facilities and the expansion of welfare programmes are of crucial importance to develop our human resources and improve the quality of the common man's life. Congress considers it an inherent right of the people to be liberated in mind through education. Congress will conduct a sustained campaign to spread literacy to all citizens to enlarge their minds and widen their awareness of the infinite potentialities of life and our glorious cultural and intellectual heritage.

Congress has initiated steps to recognise our educational system to make it more relevant to our life and economy. It will also strive to make it a more potent and dynamic instrument to strengthen the values of secularism and national integration, to imbue the scientific temper and to develop a human, rational and self-reliant outlook. The educational system will be so restructured more fully to develop the students' personality and help them face the challenges of these rapidly changing times. Congress is committed to spreading universal primary education, and measures for it will be accelerated. It will also take steps to develop vocational and non-formal education and to improve college and university education. The present examination system will undergo radical reforms. Talented students of the deprived sections of the nation will be helped to get the best education. Every effort will be made to see that teachers at all levels get their due recognition and place of honour, and that their conditions of work are improved.

Closely interlinked with quality of life is the environment and ecological balance which affects both the urban and rural population. Congress will make strenuous efforts to promote a cleaner environment. The planting of trees is an important factor, not only to conserve the environment but also to control floods and erosion. Trees also add to the wealth of the country. A vigorous campaign to plant trees will be conducted. We shall also take up a massive programme of farm-forestry which additionally provides extensive employment.

Congress is making changes in the administrative system to bring the administrator closer to the people. Its aim is to ensure a clean, honest and people-oriented administration. Congress notes with satisfaction the efforts made since the emergency to fight corruption, and it will continue to take ruthless steps to stamp out corruption from all walks of life.

In terms of the mandate given by the people, the Constitution (Forty-Second) Amendment Act, 1976 was passed. Congress emphatically states that the Amendment was made to overcome the various obstacles put by economic and political vested interests, and not for the purpose of increasing the power of the executive at the expense of the judiciary or the legislature. The dignity and impartiality of the judiciary are a valuable part of our Constitutional structure and are left intact. The Amendment, in fact, reestablishes the harmony between the legislature, the executive and the judiciary as was originally contemplated by the Constitution. The supremacy of Parliament has been reaffirmed by the Amendment but as Parliament is responsible to the people, the Amendment, really reaffirms the sovereignty of the people and their unfettered power to shape their destiny.

The Amendment has affirmed the primacy of the Directive Principles not with a view to denigrating fundamental rights but in order to ensure that the broader social and national good is given priority. This is also the rationale behind the introduction of fundamental duties. In a democratic society rights and duties are inextricably intertwined, the one cannot be viable without the other. It was, indeed, this imbalance of an exclusive emphasis on rights without a corresponding commitment to duties that created a lack of discipline and respect for national institutions. The Amendment, which reflects the hopes and aspirations of the nation, seeks to redress this imbalance and makes the Constitution a more dynamic instrument of social change and national consolidation. The Constitution embodied the philosophy of peaceful but dynamic, revolution epitomized by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. The Forty-Second amendment carries that revolution forward in the larger interests of the nation and the vast

masses of our people.

In the field of foreign relations, Congress will continue the policy of non-alignment, which has kept India out of military blocs, preserved her independence and integrity and has allowed her to judge international issues on their merits. This policy, which has been reaffirmed by the Fifth Summit of Non-Aligned countries, has made a significant contribution to the cause of world peace, progress and stability. The pursuit of this policy has won new respect for India, and even long-standing critics of non-alignment now pay tributes to Jawaharlal Nehru, the fountain-head and architect of the policy. Congress believes in peaceful co-existence, respect for the sovereignty of every nation and non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations, it seeks the friendship of all countries, particularly of India's immediate neighbours, and notes with satisfaction the recent success of India's efforts, to normalise relations with her neighbours.

Congress calls for urgent measures to establish a new International Economic Order based on justice and equality. The overgrowing gap between the rich and the poor countries must be bridged. The international community must ensure the accelerated economic growth of developing countries. The developing countries, on their part, should also promote greater cooperation among themselves and strengthen the spirit of collective self-reliance. Congress rejects the doctrine of spheres of influence and balance of power. It is opposed to all forms of colonialism, imperialism, apartheid and racialism. Consistent with India's heritage and the values of her freedom struggle, it reaffirms its support for the struggle of the oppressed people in Africa and elsewhere against colonialism and racialism. Congress welcomes detente and wants it to be extended to all parts of the world. It also calls for the implementation of the U.N. Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

The Indian National Congress is committed to a purpose. That purpose is to consolidate the country's unity, modernise society without the loss of the Indian personality, develop and integrate industries and agriculture with modern science and technology, uplift the masses and end archaic, hierarchical

systems in which discrimination and exploitation have become entrenched. The aim of Congress is to wage war against poverty, unemployment, ignorance, disease and disparity. Its objects is to remove peacefully and through the constitutional machinery of the democratic State everything that stands in the way of establishing a free, democratic and socialist society.

The bogey of "democracy in peril" has been raised by those opposition parties who were frustrated in their attempts to create disorder and thereby obstruct the fulfilment of the progressive policies of Congress. The commitment of Congress to democracy goes back to its very inception and its faith in democracy is absolute, irrevocable and unshakable. On the other hand, the people of India know that the left extremist parties do not believe in parliamentary democracy and that the main opposition on the right draws sustenance and support from elements whose profession and practice of undemocratic principles are open and manifest.

Congress pledges itself to forge ahead in the service of the nation. It will never rest on its laurels. Congress is proud of the achievements of our great nation over the last decade under the inspired leadership of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The nation was able to initiate the radical policy of bank nationalisation in 1969, to abolish the privy purses and princely privileges, to face the Bangladesh crisis of 1971 with compassion, courage and determination, to give help and assistance to millions affected by the droughts of 1972-73, to admit Sikkim into Indian Union, to carry out the peaceful and spectacular underground nuclear implosion at Pokhran in May 1974, to adopt stern but effective and successful measures to control inflation since the middle of 1974, to enter the field of space technology by launching Aryabhata in earth orbit in April, 1975, to consolidate the gains of the emergency that was declared in June 1975 for curbing the activities of disruptive and violent elements, to go forward with the Twenty-Point Programme and the Five-Point Programme which brought new hope and relief to millions, to finalise the Fifth Plan in September 1976, which provides decisive evidence that the Indian economy has turned the corner, to increase production, improve the economy significantly and

to make substantial advances in different fields in the past Indira decade. Congress is the only party which can place before the people not only its programme but also its performance for scrutiny. It is the only party which has brought about and can continue to bring peaceful changes for the benefit of the common man, while maintaining intact the structure of political stability and national integration without which no progress is possible.

The Congress appeals to the people to return its candidates to the Lok Sabha in the 1977 elections with a massive majority so that it can.

- (i) uphold the ideals of secularism, protect the interests of the minorities and the right for every community to pursue its faith and way of life,
- (ii) preserve and consolidate democracy and put an end to all forms of violence and disorder, so that people can live in peace and harmony,
- (iii) fight poverty, ignorance, disease and inequality and build a modern, prosperous, egalitarian and socialist society,
- (iv) abolish all kinds of discrimination between one human being and another and end all forms of exploitation,
- (v) develop and modernise agriculture and allied activities, expedite integrated rural development programmes and bring about a total rural regeneration,
- (vi) promote the interests of the small and marginal farmers, agriculture workers, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and backward classes and communities,
- (vii) strengthen and diversify the country's industrial base, enlarge the role of the public sector, give scope to the private sector to play its due role within the priorities of the Plan and without bringing about a concentration of economic wealth and power,
- (viii) take up a massive programme to expand opportunities for productive employment,
- (ix) protect the interests of the working class and give them

their proper share in management and in the fruits of their labour,

- (x) keep prices in check and ensure essential commodities to the people at reasonable prices,
- (xi) provide primary education to all children and improve the scope of secondary and higher education,
- (xii) expand health and medical facilities and welfare programmes for the people.

The motto of the Congress is : poverty must go, disparity must diminish and injustice must end. The Congress renews its pledge to work and toil, ceaselessly and without respite, to build a society worthy of our great nation and reflecting the vision of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

The purpose of the elections must be to provide the nation with a government at the Centre strong enough to safeguard India's independence and interests in a rapidly changing world, wise enough to preserve the legacy of tolerance and peaceful change, and determined enough to carry forward the recent gains so that, with the self-reliant technological strength already gained, the nation can march forward.

In the words of the Prime Minister, "Every election is an act of faith. It is an opportunity to cleanse public life of confusion. So let us go to the polls with resolve to reaffirm the power of the people and to uphold the fair name of India as a land committed to the path of reconciliation, peace and progress."

The Indian National Congress alone has the dynamism, the policy, the programme, the leadership and the achievement displayed through ninety one years of sustained and devoted service to the people of India. Congress is the people ! Vote for Congress.

Assemblies Elections—1978

TEXT OF THE ELECTION MANIFESTO

The year 1977, just completed, has been one of the most momentous in our country's recent history. And now, the new year 1978 promises to be equally crucial, with elections to the given Legislative Assemblies of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Meghalaya States in the last week of February.

The Test

In this great country which is the largest democracy in the world, a general election, at any time, would be important. But the present context has perhaps no parallel inasmuch as the Indian National Congress, having remained in power continuously at the Centre for three decades, bowed out of office ten months ago, it was also voted out of power in the states of Northern and Central India, after wielding Governmental power for long stretches of time since independence. After its impressive victory in the Lok Sabha Poll of March, 1977 in the State of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Karnataka and Maharashtra, its almost uninterrupted sway is again being tested. In that view, the Nation's cherished values of democracy, socialism, secularism and non-alignment in international affairs, have to be vindicated decisively by a popular mandate. For the Indian National Congress, which has stood by these values steadfastly, regardless of temporary setbacks, the coming election is therefore of critical importance.

Janata Party's Total Failure

Since the Janata Party came to power, its onslaught on

these basic and cherished values has continued to mount unabated. The policies formulated by Jawaharlal Nehru are being denigrated day in and day out. Communal riots have suddenly shown a spurt. Violent attacks on youths, students, teachers, and the working class have increased. Similarly, atrocities on minorities, schedule castes, scheduled tribes and other weaker sections by the vested interests and the dominant classes, in collusion with, or with the connivance of, the Janata Party Government have also mounted. That Government has let loose a reign of terror and torture against innocent Congress workers, as in Punjab and elsewhere, and resorted to the unprecedented acts of raiding and ransacking Congress offices on one flimsy pretext or another.

Dispossession of Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes from the lands assigned to them by the previous Governments has become the order of the day. Law and order have deteriorated everywhere and a sense of insecurity grips the mind of the common man. Vital installations in the public sector, such as atomic plants power houses and life-links the railway are seriously threatened by sabotage, endangering the stability of the country.

Particularly dangerous is the policy of the Janata Party in regard to the minorities. Composed as that Party is of disparate elements, with the Jana Sangh-RSS combination as the main active wing, it is hardly surprising that several antisecular acts should have ensued e.g., the attempt to get the country's history re-written with a particular bias, stepping up of RSS activity all over the country etc.

There is also reversal of the liberal policy of the previous Government in regard to the support to Urdu. Also, certain reported steps by the Central Government and the public utterances of some leaders of the Janata Party have created the apprehension that the language policy embodied in the Official Languages Act of 1965 is likely to be modified to the detriment of non-Hindi States.

In the sphere of foreign policy, self-respect and self-reliance, which had been the corner-stone of non-alignment all these years, are now being subtly but seriously eroded in the name

of 'genuine' non-alignment. Self-reliance in the sphere of nuclear capability is also being made subject, indeed subservient, to outside pressures. The technological and scientific talent of the country is feeling frustrated because of the faulty approach adopted by the Janata Party Government. This is also true of the administrative services at all levels.

The hollowness of the Janata Party's claim of faith in democracy has been amply demonstrated by the rigging of the recent bye-elections where polling booths were 'captured' by vested interests and the Police and Government machinery was freely used for the furtherance of the electoral prospects of the two Janata Party Chief Ministers of UP and Bihar. This is indeed a serious danger to the very system of Parliamentary Democracy.

Most crucial of all is the self-evident fact that since the Janata Party came to power, prices of all essential commodities have been spiralling upwards. This phenomenon, despite massive foreign exchange reserves and huge stocks of foodgrains built up by the previous Government—not to mention an above average harvest during the year—seems quite inexplicable according to the normal thumb-rule of demand and supply. Under the new dispensation, neither the farmer is able to get a remunerative price for his produce, nor does the consumer get any relief from soaring prices. Instances are not wanting wherever even conscientious officials charged with, and otherwise willing to perform the duty to prevent and punish profiteering and other trade offences have clearly expressed their helplessness because of the reprisals they apprehend against themselves, in case they proceed against the offenders who are fully backed by the top brass of the Janata Party Government. Thus the Janata Party Government, itself having a vested interest in the exploitative process by the middleman, has never been, and cannot be expected to be able to do anything effective in the matter of bringing down prices or keeping them in check.

The growing chaos in the industrial field is assuming alarming proportions. There is hardly any sector of industry which is free from wide-spread unrest characterised by strikes and even

acts of sabotage in the vital areas. The Janata Party Government has failed to inspire confidence and to invoke voluntary discipline among the working class, as it has repeatedly gone back on its promises. The main pillar of the accepted industrial policy i.e., keeping the public sector at commanding heights, is being given a go-by and the private sector is being encouraged to take over even some public sector units. All plans of nationalisation, even of essential industries like Sugar and Drugs now in the stranglehold of multi-national etc., seem to be far from the thinking of the Janata Party Government. With that Party's well-known love for the imperialist powers, there is every likelihood of multinationals being encouraged to further infiltrate into our economy. Self-reliance will thus be the biggest casualty under the present Janata Party Government. The concept of planning is also being diluted with fanciful notions like the rolling plan so as to confound the basic concept of perspective planning and side-track the pragmatic and rational approach to a balanced economic growth.

In the field of agriculture, the worst setback has been to the land reform programmes. There is total apathy of the present Government even to the beneficial programmes like giving house-sites for the homeless, freedom from indebtedness, liberation of bonded labour, participation of workers in the management of industries, opening of rural banks and facility of loans under the scheme of differential rates of interest, book banks for poor students etc. This betrays the callous attitude of the Janata Party towards the poor and the down-trodden.

These are but a few aspects of the general drift and deterioration in the nation's economy, due partly to the ineptness of the Janata Party Government, but mostly to the ideological stalemate which characterises the desperate nature of the Janata Party. With the Jana Sangh-RSS at one end, and the CPI (Marxist) at the other, of the political spectrum, it is hardly surprising that the Janata Party, despite the mandate it got, has largely proved to be a non-starter on the economic front. It is only indulging in platitudes, fads and fancies which have hardly any relevance to the fast-changing landscape of a nation on the march.

Thus, within one year, the country has witnessed a change-over from self-confidence to diffidence, from a well-set course to aimless drift and from a picture of solidarity to that of centrifugal strains. It is difficult to cite another example of such total failure within such a short period, after such a big mandate from the people. What is more, the common man, being the victim, is now completely disillusioned about the Janata Party's capacity to deliver the goods and is once again, quite naturally, looking up to the Congress to come his rescue.

Inadequacy

In view of these developments, Congress should have risen to the occasion to meet the challenge with resoluteness. It was also expected that the new Congress President elected in May 1977, and other senior leaders of the Party would inspire the rank and file of Congressmen to really with fresh enthusiasm and confidence.

After Mrs. Indira Gandhi's arrest and the resultant spontaneous upsurge throughout the country, it was again hoped that the countrywide resentment would be channelised so as to focus the real issues before the people. This, however, did not happen and the Congress seemed to be moving away from the politics of conviction which it had striven so hard to resurrect after the great split of 1969. In the state of disarray consequent on the electoral reverses, some Congressmen lost sight of the real cause of their defeat, viz., the reactionary combine of the forces. Some leaders swung to the other extreme of becoming unduly apologetic and defensive, engendering a complex unbecoming of, and harmful to, a mass-based, progressive and viril political party. The emphasis on Congress ideology and on its programmes for socio-economic transformation seemed to be giving way to a lukewarm attitude, rendering the Party incapable of playing its role as an effective opposition. Indeed it seemed to be too eager to give "responsive cooperation" to the Janata Government. In a word, the Congress faced the grave danger of losing its identity.

It was in the context of this inadequacy, bordering on

failure, on the part of the newly installed leadership that a National Convention of Congressmen was called. In order primarily to extricate the organisation from past fixations, to re-dedicate it to the cause of the down trodden, and to provide effective leadership, the majority of the AICC members present at the Convention unanimously elected Mrs. Indira Gandhi as Congress President.

The New Line

This event is no more and no less than a determined effort on the part of the virile and progressive component of the Party to assert itself constitutionally and to re-inspire the people by restoring the emphasis on the socialist ideology—an emphasis which had practically become non-existent during the past several months and was threatening to impute an altogether misleading image to the great Congress Party. The people of India are fully aware of what the Congress stands for, what it connotes in terms of their destiny, and under whose leadership that destiny is assured. Therefore, narrow technicalities apart, the people alone will determine the issue. It is common knowledge that ever since 1969, Mrs. Indira Gandhi had led the Congress and the country in the distance direction of socialism and a just social order. The Congress led by Mrs. Indira Gandhi reiterates its faith in, and its determination to reach, the same goal.

The Congress thereafter, asserts that an over-all *de novo* appraisal of all matters is urgently called for, while retaining the basic tenets and essentials of policy handed down by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. A mere repetition of those policies and passing resolutions thereon, which had almost assumed the form of a ritual for some time past, should now give place to an intelligent reinterpretation and reorientation relevant of the fast-changing situation and in tune with the mood of the people, particularly of the younger generation of modern India.

The Pledge

The Congress pledges itself to the following guidelines viz.

Reappraisal

A reappraisal of all Congress policies, within the framework of Democracy, Socialism, Secularism, and non-alignment. The reappraisal shall lead to formulations more in tune with the aspirations of a nation engaged in deep and intense processes of change and modernisation. It shall also visualise a more dynamic, useful and unifying role in international affairs, particularly in narrowing the gap between the developing and the developed nations and ensuring enduring peace and equitable shared prosperity.

Secular Society

Positive and imaginative measures to build a secular society. The Party shall set up a machinery to intervene at short notice, in any situation of communal tension anywhere. The Party shall also ensure the safeguarding of the rights of the minorities and their effective participation in all spheres of national life. Full protection to their educational institutions shall be given.

Involvement of Workers

A programme for the education and full involvement of Party workers in activities of socio-economic transformation at all levels.

Critical Education

An inbuilt mechanism of the Party to be devised for a critical and continuous evaluation of the implementation of Party Programmes.

Intellectuals

A programme to involve intellectuals from all walks of life,

Education with a Difference

It is well-known that during the last thirty years, phenomenal expansion has taken place in education and that by and large, schooling facilities have reached even very remote areas. But this has mainly been quantitative expansion. The serious problem of stagnation and dropout, resulting in a large number of boys and girls replacing into illiteracy, could not be effectively solved. This is partly because of the existing hiatus between the high brow institutions in cities and the ill-equipped schools in the countryside, which has become a constant source of irritation and grievance. It is high time that an educational programme in which the main emphasis is on affording equal educational opportunity to all sections of the people, is formulated and vigorously implemented. The Congress will therefore insist on the State ensuring in all possible ways, that the existing socio-economic disparities are not reflected and perpetuated in the educational and intellectual calibre of the younger generation. There will be no backward schools hereafter and a determined effort will be made to provide all schools, particularly those in remote rural areas, with adequate accommodation, teaching staff and equipment. Various incentives will be devised in order to minimise school drop-outs and to make universal primary education a success it deserves to be. At middle and higher levels of education, the vocational aspect will receive special attention, so as to make boys and girls better motivated and equipped for self-employment. In short, there will be greater emphasis on quality in education hereafter.

For a Healthy Nation

There has been considerable improvement in the general health of the people over the decades. However, it is time that in addition to the schemes currently in operation, a determined and concerted attack on all communicable diseases is mounted, beginning with infants and covering all children. Early immunisation followed by a complete health check-up of children, with the necessary follow-up and re-checking at regular intervals—these are necessary to ensure a uniformly healthy nation.

The Congress proposes to draw up a comprehensive health and vital statistics scheme to be implemented by the State Governments with the full cooperation of the people.

Agriculture

(a) As is well-known, the Congress has always laid emphasis on agriculture and irrigation. As a result of the widespread application of science and technology in agriculture, especially during the past decade, a green revolution came about in the country and despite droughts, floods and other natural calamities adversely affecting agricultural production, a record reverse of 13 million tonnes of foodgrains was build up, thus freeing the country from dependence on foreign food aid. The Janata Party's charge that the Congress had neglected agriculture is therefore sheer slander. However, it has to be realised that even for the development of agriculture, certain basic industries should not be misconstrued as being against agriculture. The very idea of counterposing agriculture against industry brought into wide currency by the Janata Party for purpose of political exploitation, is clearly untenable and outmoded. The Congress therefore reiterates its emphasis on the modernisation of agriculture and the rapid increase in agriculture production as the very base of the national economy.

(b) There is, however, a deliberate attempt on the part of some Janata Party leaders to exploit the farmer community by trying to show the interests of landlords as those of farmers in general. Nothing can be farther from the truth and the Congress therefore appeals to small and marginal farmers to beware of this misleading propaganda. It was during the Congress regime and under instructions of Mrs. Indira Gandhi that the Small Farmers Development Agency was formed and a large number of small and marginal farmers throughout the country got various kinds of concessions and benefits. The Congress will certainly strive for the expansion of those schemes so as to cover whole country within the shortest period possible. In addition, the Congress will implement the following programmes viz:

- (i) To agitate for substantial increase in the quantum of credit being made available to small and marginal farmers ;
- (ii) To see that all holdings with an area equivalent to five acres of dry land or less are exempted from land revenue ;
- (iii) To organise Banking and other financial institutions exclusively for small and marginal farmers, with adequate provision of funds ;
- (iv) To organise farmers' Agro-service Centres to cater to the various day to day needs of the farmer community ;
- (v) To get all procedures simplified in giving loans to small and marginal farmers ;
- (vi) To get the Records of Rights of small and marginal farmers updated in states where this has not yet been done, thus enabling the farmers to obtain loans expeditiously and easily ;
- (vii) To see that small and marginal farmers, as such, are treated as economically weaker sections, for such concessions and benefits as may be available to such sections.

However, several additional measures are necessary in order to bring about an all round development of agriculture. Apart from agriculture production as such, the establishment of agro-industries needs to be taken on massive scale all over the country. It is also necessary to see that agriculture and agro-industries have an organic unity in composition, interest and operation. The Congress lays special emphasis on this aspect and will see the State Governments keep it constantly in view.

To save Indian agriculture from the hazardous enterprise it still happens to be, crop and cattle insurance are essential. This has been recognised on all hands for a long time. The Congress will make special efforts to get appropriate schemes of crop and cattle insurance initiated at the earliest.

A Natural Calamities Commission with an adequate fund corpus is necessary in order to meet the sudden visitation of

natural calamities. The Congress accept this in principle and will endeavour to bring about the early formation of such a Commission at the national level.

Village Artisans

Since ancient times, our village artisans have played a very important role in the life of the people. They have combined utility with beauty and made substantial contribution to the enrichment of Indian life, besides bringing name and fame to the country from the wide world: Rural economy largely depends, and will continue to depend, on village artisans whose lot needs to be improved in a variety of ways. The Congress under Mrs. Indira Gandhi did lay emphasis on handicrafts etc., in the past and will further intensify the programme of assistance to the village artisans of training maintenance, providing improved tools, supply of capital and marketing of their products.

Industry

In the industrial field, the country has made impressive progress under the Congress Government. But the advent of the Janata Party Government has only witnessed setbacks in the process of industrialisation and a fall in industrial production. This has to be traced to the ineptness of the Janata Party Government and also to the confused ideas which that Party seems to entertain in regard to the pattern of industrialisation. Augmenting the volume of employment through industrialisation is essential and the Congress has always laid emphasis on this aspect. But under this or any other pretext, it would not be proper to embark on a process which, in effect, would amount to primitivisation of the society in general and of the economy in particular. The Congress therefore emphasises the need to formulate a pattern of industrialisation which combines maximum possible employment with the level of sophistication appropriate to a modernising society. This would inevitably require an intensive quest for appropriate technology in every

field of industry. The Congress will undertake to initiate this process in order to achieve the pattern of industrialisation which is best suited to the country and its genius. The State Government will be at the vanguard of this new process.

To Rectify the Model

The model of Parliamentary Democracy which we have adopted, requires a high degree of awakening on the part of the masses. Experience has shown that in some feudal and semi-feudal areas, elevation processes are manipulated and distorted in a variety of ways. The elimination of money power and physical intimidation by vested interests is a matter about which immediate remedial measures need to be devised. The Janata Party, despite its loud professions in this regard, has not only not addressed itself to this issue, but actually resorted to these methods to gain undeserved electoral victories. Further, in violation of its pious statements, it has also induced defections. The Congress will immediately take up both these issues in right earnest and help correct the serious aberrations that have crept into our electoral processes.

Reducing Inequality

In the ultimate analysis, ensuring better socio-economic conditions to the poor is the crucial programme on which all else depends. But better conditions, in the real sense, can never be achieved in a context of constantly increasing disparity. The Congress will therefore act with the political will to minimise inequalities in the socio-economic set-up, particularly in the rural context where economic disparity tends to accentuate and perpetuate social stratification and domination of the many by the few and where inequality leads directly to inequity and exploitation. It will direct the State Governments to be particularly conscious on this aspect while implementing various socio-economic programmes at the field level. It will also ensure the vigorous implementation of the programme enunciated in para 10 above.

To Resist Injustice

The Congress pledges itself to relentless programmes of mass resistance against the various atrocities of the Janata Party Government and of the vested interests enjoying its patronage. The Congress will stand solidly behind the minorities, teachers, students, labour etc., who are the victims of harassment and physical torture. It will fully justify the faith of the people in its effectiveness and popularity; in its capacity to stand by the weaker sections of society; in its commitment to bring about a steady improvement in their status and living standards; and in its solicitude to resolve their myriad problems. It will organise them and stand by them in all their struggles to achieve their legitimate rights and status, against the forces of reaction which try to obstruct the inexorable processes of change. The struggle will be by peaceful and non-violent methods and will obviate the extreme ordeals of violence and disorder, which are the price which Society would otherwise have to pay. The Congress will continuously strive towards new horizons of progress and change, since no Party can survive except as an instrument of rapid special change. The power of the people shall be the sanction behind the Congress.

The Call

The Congress, reinforced by a renewed faith in its ideals and rejuvenated by recent experience, once again appeals to the people to stand by it at this critical juncture in the Nation's march towards a better tomorrow.

Seventh General Elections—1980

Lok Sabha Mid-term Poll

TEXT OF THE ELECTION MANIFESTO

The people of India elected the Sixth Lok Sabha in March, 1977. Within twenty eight months the Janata Party Government at the Centre fell. This is the first time that the Lok Sabha has had to be dissolved less than midway through its term. That such a mandate and massive majority should have come to nought, almost overnight, conclusively proves the Janata Party's flair for disintegration and its dubious distinction of inaugurating an era of instability and uncertainty at the Centre. However, the dissolution of the Sixth Lok Sabha has brought relief and hope to an exasperated electorate, groaning under the insufferable mis-governance of the past two and a half years.

The assumption of power by the Janata Party brought serious danger to our polity. For the first time in independent India North and South were split. The longer the Janata Party ruled on the basis of its mandate in the North, the more it alienated not only the South but also East and North-eastern India.

The people of India have now to address themselves to the arduous task of setting the country once again on the road to order stability and purposeful governance. The Indian National Congress invites them to respond to this grave challenge on the eve of this mid term poll.

The Congress Legacy

The Indian National Congress waged a historic struggle for independence and proceeded to build a new India based on

the principles of democracy, secularism, socialism and non-alignment under the leadership and inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. It gave the country a strong economic base, ranking eighth in world and providing sinews of strength which enabled the nation to face three military invasions and many other crises. Above all, the Congress gave durable political stability to the country and enabled it to make rapid all-round progress through planned and integrated development. Vigorous steps were taken to develop science and technology and the country today can take pride in possessing the world's third largest scientific and technological manpower. The Congress also promoted and strengthened national integration and combated communalism, linguistic fanaticism and regional parochialism.

Janata Party Mis-Rule

All these assets were squandered away in just two and a half years of Janata Party misrule. The country was plunged into an enveloping crisis—economic, social and political. The process of weaving an integrated national structure from the strands of our diversity was not only halted but actually reversed. Law and order deteriorated disastrously. Atrocities against scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, minorities and other weaker sections increased greatly and kept mounting in ferocity. There were over two hundred and fifty reported communal riots. About 40,000 people were affected in Jamshedpur alone, not to mention similar widespread distress in Belchi, Agra, Marathwada, Villupuram, Kanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Aligarh, Pantnagar etc. The Christian Community also came in for attack recently. According to impartial observers, the main manipulator of these incidents was the RSS whose activists were inducted in large numbers in every branch of administration.

The integrity of the country was threatened by the Janata Party's fanatical policies on sensitive issues like language, Centre-State relations and the treatment meted out to Indian Nationals who were deported from some areas and harassed on the false plea of being foreigners.

Economy Shattered

When the Congress demitted office, it had left behind a strong industrial base, modern agriculture, a sound infrastructure for further development, a buffer stock of 20 million tonnes of food and sizeable foreign exchange reserves. Prices had been stabilised by 1975-76 and the tempo of industrial production was maintained at a high level. The Public Sector had also started yielding profits.

Despite all these valuable assets, the incoherent policies of the Janata Party Government have ruined the economy. Industrial production has slumped and the Public Sector is running at a loss. There is a steep fall in the production of steel, coal, cement, paper, power—in fact in all essential commodities. For a country with a 2,000 miles sea coast, even salt has gone into short supply, perhaps in the first time in history. Hardly any sector of industry is free from widespread unrest. The main pillar of our accepted industrial policy, i.e., keeping the Public Sector at commanding heights, was practically abandoned. Self-reliance has become the biggest casualty. The concept of planning was diluted with fanciful notions like the rolling plan.

Increased Unemployment

When the Janata Party assumed office, it promised to banish unemployment completely in 10 years. Ironically however, even the backlog of unemployment over the last two years has admittedly gone up by over a million.

Price Hike

Worst of all, the prices of all essential commodities, both agricultural and non-agricultural, kept spiralling upwards. The farmer did not get remunerative prices for his produce, nor did the consumer get any relief from the bumper harvests of the past two years. Only middle-men profited enormously. Hoarding, profiteering and other trade and economic offences

flourished because the offenders were fully backed by the top echelons of the Janata Party Government.

The gold auctions held some time back by the Janata Party Government were yet another glaring instance of the collusion of Government high-ups with vested interests to defraud the nation. The auctions did not bring stability in the price of gold, nor did they succeed in stopping smuggling of the metal. Only hoarders and smugglers profited by this ill-conceived measure, while the price of gold soared far beyond the reach of the average citizen. This was perhaps the parting gift of the Janata Party to the Indian housewife.

Confusion in Education

The Janata Party Government created utter confusion in education. Attacking the 10+2+3 pattern, they undermined everything that had been done to improve the quality of education. Attempts to bring about equality of educational opportunity were undermined. Eventually, however, their government itself came to an abrupt end before they could spell out their educational policies.

Allocations for several important areas of education viz. Universities, Higher Education and Technological Education were slashed drastically while very generous provisions made available to the RSS by making it the principal agency in tailored programmes of adult education. There was a perceptible spurt in RSS activity in many University campuses. Secular text-books were withdrawn and replaced by others with communal bias. Attempts were made to rewrite Indian History with a similar bias.

Nation's Health Ignored

In health and family planning, the record of the Janata Party Government is worse than dismal. Fads regarding the admixture of different systems of medicines at certain levels of the health personnel led to much avoidable controversy. No significant progress was seen in any item of health, preventive

or curative. About the total fiasco in the programme of population control, the less said the better.

For millions of Indian children, the Janata Party Government did nothing concrete in connection with the International Year of the Child. Not a single programme has been put on the ground. And to top it all, came the disgraceful revelation that the Children's Nutrition Programme, scanty as it was, became a fraud in many parts of the country.

Vendetta—Sole Concern

In order to cover their all-round failure and in a bid to destroy the Congress and all it stands for, the Janata Party Government let loose unabated persecution of Congressmen, particularly on Smt. Indira Gandhi and her colleagues. The Central Home Ministry set up numerous Commissions which, after marathon enquiries found practically nothing against her. The Ministry also arrested her, only to receive an instant judicial rebuff by way of an order of discharge. Exasperated, the then Home Minister (who is the present Caretaker Prime Minister) spoke of a Nuremberg type of trial. But realising that to be unconstitutional, Government hit upon the new device of Special Courts.

This extraordinary measure was sought to be justified by the excuse that a speedy trial cannot be had through the existing judicial machinery. The Supreme Court had, however, expressed exactly the contrary opinion on this point. One of the judges of the Supreme Court had even highlighted the danger of the Special Court degenerating into a contrivance for "handling down pre-arranged judgements to hand-picked accused put up before hand-picked judges." Yet the Janata Party Government set up the Special Courts, creating dangerous precedent open to gross misuse and arbitrary application. That the Party would stop short at nothing in its blind vendetta was demonstrated when by its majority, it expelled Smt. Gandhi from the Lok Sabha and sent her to prison, flouting the verdict of the people who had elected her.

Bumgling in Foreign Affairs

The great edifice of foreign policy shaped by Shri Jawaharlal Nehru and pursued over three decades with vision and wisdom, was largely distorted and even reversed by the Janata Party Government. As a result, India's role in international affairs became ineffective and this great nation was relegated to the humiliating position of a non-entity.

The Janata Party Government claimed that it was pursuing genuine non-alignment and that it had improved India's relations with its neighbours. On the contrary, the Janata Party's 'genuineness' only drew it closer to the forces of neo-colonialism and economic imperialism, while tending to alienate the sympathy and support of friends who had stood by us in need. Nor was there any real improvement in our relations with neighbouring countries.

Irresponsible statements made by the Janata Party Prime Minister (Shri Morarji Desai) on the liberation of Goa and the merger of Sikkim, on the abandoning of our sovereign right to use nuclear technology (including nuclear explosion) for peaceful purposes; the dubious deals made with some multi-nationals; the buying of Jaguar planes despite serious doubts regarding their suitability; and more recently, the utterly amateurish behaviour of our (new caretaker) External Affairs Minister and his delegation at the Commonwealth meet in Lusaka; their inept performance in Havana—all this and much more demonstrate the utter lack of grasp on the part of the Janata Party leadership (of both factions) in the delicate field of international affairs.

Hotch Potch

The Janata Party never functioned as a homogenous political entity, composed as it was of widely disparate and irreconcilable constituents. Its Government was merely a coalition of convenience, bound by common desire to cling to power. However, both these factors, failed and in spite of utilising its entire energy in a desperate attempt to hold together, the

Janata Party did come apart in the most unedifying manner.

The disintegration of the Janata Party has proved conclusively that opportunistic coalitions cannot succeed in a country of India's dimensions and complexity. Now, the coalition that was the Janata Party has further split into two coalitions, each of which is even more heterogenous and irreconcilable than the original Janata Party. One has only to note the public vituperation of the two factions against each other. No further comment is needed regarding the ability of these two improvised conglomerations to solve the country's problems. The situation has become still more curious and confusing when parties claiming to be leftist began shortsighted and unprincipled alliances with casteist and reactionary parties.

Congress—The New Hope

It is difficult to cite a parallel of such subject failure within such a short period after such a big mandate from the people. No wonder, the common man, who is the victim, is now completely disillusioned with both the Janata and Lok Dal factions and is once again looking to the Congress to help him.

Strains in the Congress

After the electoral reverses of 1977, the Congress found itself subjected to tremendous internal strains. However, when it was about to lose its identity and effective leadership, a majority of the AICC members assembled at a Convention at New Delhi on 1st and 2nd January, 1978 and unanimously elected Smt. Indira Gandhi as Congress President. The people themselves endorsed this action in the Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka etc. In February, 1978 and various bye-elections. Their clear verdict was that the Congress-I alone could lead the country in the distinct direction of secularism, socialism and a just social order.

Some leaders continued to operate as a ramshackle party under the name and style of Indian National Congress (called Congress-S), despite further repeated defeats (with many forfeitures of security deposits). Their sole motivation was craze

for power and they were at last rewarded with positions in Shri Charan Singh's Ministry. Their Party, however, has become utterly irrelevant to the people and after losing its identity under Shri Charan Singh's leadership, is fast disappearing from the political scene.

Rare Achievement

As is well-known, the Indian National Congress-I (so described by the Election Commission to distinguish it from others) under Smt. Indira Gandhi, functioned as an effective democratic opposition at the Centre. It led many historic popular struggles, exposed the Janata Party time and again and attracted the masses as well as political workers in a manner reminiscent of the epic anti-British movement.

The experience of the past two and a half years has clearly demonstrated that only a stable and progressive Government with a clear majority in Parliament, with an indomitable political will, with a clear socio-economic goal, with a definite programme coupled with the determination to implement it and with a leadership that has been tested in times of internal and external upheavals and pressures—only such a Government can fulfil the expectations and urgent needs of the masses and lift the country from out of the chaos created by the Janata Party and the Lok Dal Governments.

The Indian National Congress-I is the only party and Smt. Indira Gandhi is the only leader who can save the country, after its recent traumatic experience. No other Party or leader can be trusted to do so. The temporary setback that occurred in 1977 has proved disastrous; the country and the Congress have both realised the cost. The people, therefore, are back with the Congress with redoubled affection. The Congress (I) will never alienate that affection.

Change with Stability

Congress-I will stem the all-round deterioration and drift resulting from the Janata Party's misrule. It will set the

country once again on the path of dynamic, meaningful and orderly social change, at the same time ensuring stability which has become a *sine qua non* at the present juncture.

Secular Society

Congress, being irrevocably committed to secularism, will take positive measures to build a secular society and to counter the trends of disharmony brought about by the policies and actions of the Janata Party Government. It will safeguard the rights of the minorities and ensure their effective participation in all spheres of national life, with full protection to their educational institutions as provided in the Constitution and full freedom of religious practice and cultural pursuit.

For strengthening secularism, Congress-I will create a national consensus against political, cultural and social organisations which seek to undermine the basic character of the Indian polity or promote sectional, caste, community or religious interests to divide the working people and undermine the national will to secure a just economic and social order.

The effective and timely control of communal disturbances shall rest squarely on the District administration and any failure on their part will promptly entail suitable action. Special measures will be taken to bring offenders to book speedily and deterrently.

A special peace-keeping force will be created to prevent and suppress communal violence. It will be composed of people drawn from minority communities, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and others. A beginning will be made in the process of affording recompense to the victims of communal riots.

Congress will strengthen and give statutory status to the Minorities Commission which the Janata Party Government deliberately rendered ineffective by a variety of devices. It was not allowed to function even with normal efficiency and its reports were kept in cold storage. Congress will examine the said reports at once and pursue expeditious action on all important recommendations. The Commission will also be

charged with the responsibility of reviewing and reporting on the implementation of the constitutional safeguard given to the minorities.

So far as the economic condition of minorities, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections of the society is concerned, a thorough examination is needed to ascertain if the benefits of various fiscal policies of Governments, both Union and States, do really reach them. It is learnt that incentives, facilities and other encouragements, entitlements, like licences, quotas, loans etc. are not being fully availed of. A high power panel, including members belonging to minorities, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and weaker sections will be appointed to go into the whole question and make recommendations.

The minority character of the Aligarh Muslim University will be assured.

Equitable employment opportunities to minorities will be ensured in Government services, including the law and order and security personnel.

The traditional arts and crafts in which some minority communities have acquired special expertise and which have become their main occupation in some areas, such as weaving, lock-making etc. will be revived and strengthened.

We will not interfere with the personal law of the minorities.

Immediate corrective steps will be taken to ensure proper management of Waqf properties by revamping existing legislation wherever necessary.

It has always been the policy of the Congress to give adequate representation to minorities, including Muslims and Christians, both in the organisational and parliamentary wings. We feel that in every field of national activity as also in the affairs of the Government, the totality of the population should be properly and effectively reflected and represented in the interest of national integration.

All derogatory references to religious leaders should be deleted from text-books.

Languages

All languages of India will receive equal encouragement for their speedy development as media of expression, education and administration. Intensified efforts will be made to introduce the latest innovations in printing and type-writing techniques in all languages at the earliest, so as to expand and speed up book production and literary propagation.

There will be no imposition of Hindi in any form.

Urdu

The Urdu language will be assured its legitimate status in consonance with its historical, social and literary significance.

As already declared by the Congress, Urdu will be recognised in some States as a second language to be used for official purposes. It will be the endeavour of our party to continue to strive for the protection, preservation and promotion of this great language by providing facilities for the teaching of Urdu at all levels.

Protection to Tribal Population

Congress will intensify and enlarge the programme to make the tribal population of the country self-reliant and to bring it the benefits of development and progress. Congress, however, will ensure that there is no interference with their traditional way of life and that their identity and culture are retained. Adequate measures will be taken to prevent their being uprooted from their original abodes in the North-Eastern and other States of India.

Strengthening of Democracy

The use of money power and physical intimidation by vested interests, particularly in some backward areas needs immediate remedial measures. The Janata Party despite its tall promises, never addressed itself to these issues, and actually

resorted to these very methods to gain undeserved electoral victories. Further, in violation of its pious statements, it also induced defections, and itself become the victim of a massive defection recently. Congress will therefore take up these vital issues in right earnest and help in correcting the aberrations that have crept into our democratic process.

Democratic Decentralisation

Congress will strengthen the process of democratic decentralisation so as to ensure the massive involvement of the people in political as well as socio-economic activities beginning from the grass-root level. Removal of social evils such as dowry etc. will receive high priority.

Economic Programme

Congress reiterates its faith in, and determination to achieve, the objective of a socialist society adopted under Jawaharlal Nehru's leadership and enshrined in the Constitution of India under Smt. Indira Gandhi's leadership. Congress will rectify the distortion introduced by the Janata Party Government in the concept of planning and once again utilise the planning process to reorganise the national economy so as to establish a harmonious balance between various sectors and to ensure full utilisation of human and material resources so as to enable involvement of the largest number of our people in economic activity free from exploitation.

Congress will resuscitate the economy and put it back on the road to recovery and self-sustained growth. The emphasis on technological development which suffered a set-back during the Janata Party regime will receive renewed attention and support.

Congress will make a two-pronged attack in respect of demand supply, in order to contain the two digit inflation unleashed by the Janata Govt. Conspicuous consumption will be controlled by appropriate fiscal measures and monetary management. A coordinated and effective programme will be drawn

to boost the sagging levels of the production by improving the investment climate and providing timely and adequate supplies of essential inputs. Full utilisation of licenced capacity in all sectors will be ensured by insistence on drastic efficiency measures. Determined efforts will be made to remove transport bottlenecks, to improve the operating efficiency of power plants and to deal deterrently with smuggling, hoarding and other economic offences. Recourse will be made on a cautious and selective basis to utilise our foreign exchange reserves for vital imports calculated to increase local production capacity and enhance export potential in the long run.

National Incomes Policy

Congress proposes to formulate a broad national policy on incomes whose primary purpose will be to evolve acceptable relativity norms between different sectors and professions in their earnings structure, with a view to safeguarding the norms so determined from inflationary pressures as far as possible and maintain their inter se balance.

Energy Policy

Acute shortage of power and energy have been witnessed under the Janata Rule. Our power plants are working much below their installed capacity, primarily due to inefficient management and shortages in supplies of coal for coal based thermal units. Congress is deeply concerned about this situation and promises to take very early steps to embark upon a plan to revamp and revitalise the operation of the power sector.

On the broad energy front, a comprehensive National Policy on energy will be formulated to cover all available sources of energy, beginning from the conversion of organic wastes and production of bio-gas in the rural areas. Coal will remain a very important supplier of energy in India for a long time to come. Congress, however, believes that in the ultimate analysis we have to reduce dependence on non-renewable sources of energy, solar energy, wind power etc., depending on

their economic feasibility. The programme for Rural Electrification will be pursued vigorously. Wastages in the utilisation of energy will be carefully identified and a determined effort will be made to eliminate them.

Transport Policy

The virtual chaos in the transport system has hit industrial production very hard under the Janata Party regime. Congress will attend to this matter and take steps to meet the pressing needs of modernisation and expansion of railways, ports, airports, road transport, and other media of transport, including urban transport.

Congress will frame a National Transport Policy for the country which will reorganise all the transport systems available in a well-integrated perspective ranging from the jet and electrification of rail traction to the modernisation of the village bullock-cart for rural areas. Apart from adequate transport infrastructure, mass transit systems, backed by proper land use planning and control, will be encouraged, with due emphasis on para-transit systems, such as taxis, auto-rickshaws, scooters etc. Improvement in the design of both motorized and non-motorized rickshaws will receive immediate attention. Similarly, encouragement to dieselisation will be considered.

Resource Mobilisation

Congress is fully aware that the various programmes and schemes it has suggested will require investible resources. Congress has always believed in real resource planning, and not merely in financial planning. With the improvement in the country's food and foreign exchange position, the two most severe constraints on the country's real resource position have been considerably relaxed. Congress will now attend to the crucial task of mobilizing the necessary quantum of domestic resources by adopting correct fiscal and monetary policies.

Congress will revamp the operation of public undertakings

to ensure that they generate necessary internal resources for development. Our system of direct and indirect taxation will be overhauled so as to eliminate loopholes for tax evasion and avoidance. Voluntary savings schemes will be mobilised to provide safe and profitable avenues for investment. Sources of provident fund and life savings will also be tapped by introducing fresh financial innovations and incentives, so that people can get adequate and attractive return on their investments. At the same time, determined efforts will be made to eliminate wasteful public expenditure, so that the nation gets the best value for every rupee spent by the Government.

Taxation Reform and Relief

Congress will review the existing tax system and restructure it so as to reduce the burden on the middle class, to remove the harassment of the small trader and to bring about equitable responsibilities on all affluent sections for the benefit of the society as a whole.

With the cooperation of the State Governments, Congress will explore the possibility of replacing the existing Sales Tax structure with a more modern and effective system, so as to afford relief to the consumer, to avoid harassment of the trader and to obviate corruption.

Octroi

States where Octroi is in force will be persuaded to abolish it.

Taxis, Rickshaws & Trucks

Congress will take steps :

- (a) To permit replacement of petrol engines fitted in diesel engines.
- (b) To assist and encourage the motorisation of cycle rickshaws on a massive scale.
- (c) To end the alleged discrimination in the grant of All

India Permits to trucks and to make the procedure uniform.

Widespread application of science to agriculture during the Congress regimes had brought about a green revolution in the past decade, obviating food imports to a large extent. The Janata Party's charge that Congress had neglected agriculture is therefore sheer slander. The very idea of counterposing agriculture against industry, brought into wide currency by the Janata Party for political exploitation, is obviously untenable. The Congress reiterates its emphasis on the modernisation of agriculture and the rapid increase in agriculture production as the very basis of the national economy.

However, a deliberate attempt was made by leaders of the Janata Party, particularly those of the Lok Dal faction, to equate the interests of big landlords with those of farmers *should beware of this dangerous and reactionary trend*. It was during this Congress regime, under Smt. Indira Gandhi, that the small Farmer's Development Agency was formed and a large number of small and marginal farmers got various kinds of concessions and benefits. Congress will certainly expand these schemes so as to cover the whole country within the shortest possible time. In addition, Congress will implement the following programme viz :

- (i) There will be substantial increases in the quantum of credit available to small and marginal farmers ;
- (ii) Regional Rural Banks and other financial institutions will be revived exclusively for small and marginal farmers with adequate provision of funds ;
- (iii) The scheme of differential rates of interest on bank loans for the benefit of small farmers and other weaker sections will be revived ;
- (iv) The policy of credit to the farmer will be reexamined so as to reduce the higher rate of interest charged to the farmer as a result of the margins allowed to intermediate banking institutions ;
- (v) Procedure for giving loans to small and marginal farmers will be simplified ;

- (vi) Records for Rights will be updated in States where this has not been done ;
- (vii) Small farmers will be enabled to augment their incomes from ancillary occupations such as Diary, Poultry, Sericulture etc ;
- (viii) Agro-Industries will be established on a large scale ;
- (ix) Farmers' Agro-service Centres will be expanded to meet the day-to-day needs of farmers in respect of supplies and services ;
- (x) Warehousing facilities will be created in rural areas on a large scale ;
- (xi) All holdings with an area equivalent to five acres of dry land or less will be exempted from land revenue and in general, steps will be taken to abolish land revenue in its present form, replacing it with a more equitable and less cumbersome levy with adequate relief to the small farmers ;
- (xii) Small and marginal farmers, as such, will be treated as economically weaker sections, and given all such concessions and benefits as may be available to those sections ;
- (xiii) A programme of constructing metalled approach roads connecting all villages will be undertaken ;
- (xiv) Outlays on rural electrification, particularly in the States where it is lagging and special emphasis given to lift irrigation schemes to benefit small farmers will be expedited to achieve therein substantial coverage (over 75%) within five years ;
- (xv) Storage capacity for agricultural produce will be substantially increased by a crash five year programme ;
- (xvi) Schemes of crop insurance will be initiated and those of cattle insurance will be expanded so as to achieve substantial coverage within five years ;
- (xvii) Substantial increases will be made in the production of millets, pulses and oilseeds and special programmes undertaken for the development of land and dry farming in general ;
- (xviii) A Commission for Relief from Natural Disasters will be set up with an adequate fund corpus to attend to such

disasters expeditiously and to afford immediate relief to the farmers and others affected.

Congress will intensify the formulation and implementation of special programme for the development of water-management and employment of sophisticated technology to improve not merely production but the lot of every farmer. Development of Drought Prone Areas and Hill Areas and reclamation of alkaline and saline lands will be intensified on a high priority basis.

Minimum Levels of Income to the Farmer

The Janata Party Government despite its loud professions, did little to protect agriculturists' income from the vagaries of nature or the adverse effects of market forces. Congress is genuinely keen to meet this challenge. The working of the Agricultural Prices Commission and the Food Corporation of India needs vast improvement, Congress will therefore ensure :

- (a) That greater attention is paid to the farmer's cost structure. Input cost indexation of support prices will be instituted so as to safeguard the farmer's income from inflationary trends ;
- (b) That the farmer is not put to loss due to deficiencies in the market mechanism ;
- (c) That the purchasing machinery is reorganised on a decentralised basis to cater to the needs of the small farmers.

Public Distribution System

Congress will revive and revitalise the Public Distribution system, which ought to have been strengthened at all levels during the years of bumper harvests and economic buoyancy but as was dismantled by the Janata Party Government. It will hereafter remain a stable and permanent feature of our economy.

Employment

To achieve maximum employment within the shortest possible time, rural and urban artisans will be provided with greater opportunities for self-employment. Industries will be expanded and dispersed to backward areas and smaller towns. Industrial schemes with higher employment potential will be preferred.

Congress proposes that at least one adult member per family is employed at a socially acceptable wage level within a time-bound programme. Constitutional constraints on the scheme, if any, will be sorted out.

Congress will implement, on a much larger scale than ever before, programmes for the utilisation of our abundant manpower, by taking massive schemes to build large-sized community assets, such as soil conservation, afforestation, desilting of rivers and irrigation channels etc. This scheme will in their nature, extent and duration, guarantee employment on a continuing basis.

A phased scheme will be drawn up to create self-employment avenues for skilled and qualified young men and women, by helping to organise themselves as entrepreneurial groups for the economic development of specified rural areas. The organisation, suitably integrated with the community, will be instrumental in generating further economic activity and in progressively indigenising it.

Employment Abroad

Regulations in regard to Indian nationals seeking employment in other countries will be examined so as to obviate hardships, if any.

Industry

Congress believes in the integrated development of basic, large, medium, small and village industries. Augmenting the volume of employment through industries is essential, but

under this or any other pretext, it would not be proper to embark on a process of primitivisation of the Society, Congress therefore emphasises a pattern of industrialisation which combines maximum possible employment with the level of sophistication appropriate to a modernising society. It will undertake the inevitable quest for appropriate technology in every field of industry, so as to achieve an industrial pattern which combines viability and decentralisation, as far as practicable.

Monopolies

Congress(1) believes in restricting the growth of Monopolies to the utmost possible extent in the interest of an egalitarian order. Appropriate measures will be taken in pursuance of this objective. Steps already devised will be made more effective.

Multi-Nationals

The role of multi-nationals in the various sectors of industry will be examined thoroughly with a view to devising suitable measures to restrict their activity and to counter the deleterious effects thereof on the country's economy.

On the Labour Front

Worker's participation in industries is one of the cardinal aims of the Congress. We regard the participation of workers in the production and management processes to be vital. Such participation will be steadily enlarged and Government Undertakings will provide an effective lead in this behalf. The interests and welfare of labour constantly kept in view, as an overriding measure of social justice.

Filling to Science

The causes of recent frustration in the country's scientific community will be removed and remedial measures taken. Encouragement will be given to Indian scientists abroad who offer

assistance to Indian in their respective fields of specialisation in so far as such assistance is found useful in the Indian context.

Congress will undertake comprehensive programmes of Research and Development covering all sectors of industry. Special attention will be paid to alternative sources of energy ; easy and inexpensive methods of restricting birthrate ; imaginative and long-range projects of ecological importance ; food technology, fruit preservation ; control of communicable diseases etc. India will also make its contribution in these and other fields of research by collaborating with other countries.

Village Artisans

Since ancient times, our village artisans have combined utility with beauty. The rural economy will still continue to depend largely on them. Congress will therefore expand programmes to assist village artisans in a big way for training, maintenance, provision of improved tools, supply of raw material and capital and marketing of their produce, including export promotion.

Weavers

The handloom industry sustains a large section of rural population and the weavers of India have been hailed for their products. Congress had always tried to help handloom weavers, particularly under the 20-point programme. Those efforts will be intensified and new avenues of developing the industry will be devised, including export promotion on a large-scale. Adequate credit will also be made available.

Weaker Sections

Congress will formulate and implement the following programmes specially meant for weaker sections :

- (i) Provision of clean drinking water to all needy villages in five years :

- (ii) Rural housing on a country-wide scale, preceded by free distribution of house sites and provision of infrastructure as a strictly time bound programme ;
- (iii) Slum clearance in urban areas ; special attention will be paid to *safai karamcharis* ;
- (iv) Liquidation of rural indebtedness and ending of bonded labour.

The 20-point programme which had come as a boon to the poor, the landless, the artisans, handloom weavers and a host of other weaker and socially depressed sections, will be revised and rejuvenated. Bank credit denied to the weaker sections under Janata Party rule will be resumed and expanded.

The Minimum Needs Programme started in the Fifth Plan by Congress Government which has been languishing, despite the Janata Party's lip service will once again be accorded highest priority. Financial allocation for the programme will be increased and an effective machinery set up to monitor and complete it in 10 years.

Serious efforts will be directed towards the implementation of land reforms, especially in States which have lagged behind. A drive will be launched to restore to the original assignees, the lands from which they were ejected during the Janata Party regime.

Agricultural Labour

Congress will formulate special programmes for the benefit of agricultural labour and get them implemented vigorously. Priority will be given to agricultural labour in the provision of free house sites and assistance in the construction of houses, schooling to their children, ensuring minimum wages, eliminating seasonal under-employment, etc.

Women

The Congress is pledged to the emancipation of women, so that they have equal opportunities to contribute to the larger

cause of the nation. An atmosphere must be created in the society to prevent the denigration and exploitation of women.

Congress will initiate action to ameliorate their status and condition of women—such as equal remuneration for equal work, equal minimum wages, special educational opportunities on a larger scale to make up the existing deficiency, increased representation in various avenues of public activity, special measures to prevent and punish abuse of Harijan and Adivasi women, resisting all attempts to abridge the rights of women—including the right to property—directly or indirectly.

Backward Classes

Adequate provision will be made for socially and educationally backward classes for educational facilities and in Government services.

Deprived Sections

Congress will implement a welfare programme for the old and destitute, and for the rehabilitation of beggars and similar deprived sections.

Reservation to SCs & STs

Congress will take immediate steps to amend the Constitution so as to extend reservations to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

Social Security

Congress will introduce a phased but comprehensive social security programme covering all sections of population both in rural and urban areas.

Ex-Servicemen

Congress will restore and rigorously implement, the reservation of jobs and other concessions available to ex-servicemen which were either withdrawn or were not honestly implemented during the Janata Party rule.

Pensioners

Congress will examine the question of the welfare of pensioners with a view to make their line more secure and comfortable. Suitable concessions will be devised in this behalf.

Freedom Fighters

Congress, under Smt. Indira Gandhi's leadership had started a scheme to render assistance to freedom fighters. The scheme had benefited a large number of freedom fighters whose service and sacrifice were recognised in a useful and tangible manner. Congress will revive and continue the scheme which is said to have been since suspended during the Janata Party rule. The disposal of pending cases of grant of pension to freedom fighters will be expedited.

Education with a Difference

Congress will emphasise not merely quantitative expansion in education but will seriously take up the task of equalising educational opportunities to all sections of the people so that existing socio-economic disparities are not perpetuated in the educational attainment and intellectual calibre of the younger generation. A massive drive will be launched to provide all schools, particularly those in remote rural areas, with adequate accommodation, teaching staff and equipment. Incentives will be devised to minimise school drop-out and to make universal primary education the success it deserves to be. Institutions of technical education and those of other specialised training will be dispersed in rural areas so as to facilitate a continuous transfer of technology of those areas.

Universities and high level technical institutes will be strengthened so that India retains its pride of place in respect of technical and scientific man-power. The autonomy of Universities will be assured.

The School Health Programme and the Mid-day Meal Programme will be expanded and strengthened so as to cover all children within a period of five years.

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The School Health Programme and the Mid-day Meal Programme will be expanded and strengthened so as to cover all children within a period of five years.

The Book Bank Scheme will be revived and an appropriate scheme of scholarship and hostels implemented so as to serve remote rural areas.

Comprehensive 'Earn While you Learn' as well as 'Learn while you earn' schemes will be formulated for the benefit of poor students. The Polytechnics, the ITIs, and other institutions of technical education will be involved in remunerative schemes to impart practical skills to trainees while enabling them to meet the cost of their education to the extent possible.

Congress will pursue appropriate follow up action on the constitutional amendment transferring Education from the State to the Concurrent List. Without affecting the existing initiative and autonomy of the State Governments, steps will be devised to bring about a desirable measure of uniformity in the patterns and standards of education throughout the country. Special efforts will be made to promote 'Centre of excellence' as envisaged by the Education Commission, 1966. Examination reform will receive high priority. Financial outlays on education will be stepped up so as to reach, within two plan periods, the level prescribed in the Education Policy Resolution of the Government of India, 1968, viz. 6% of the national incomes.

Congress will set up a National Commission on Teachers, to consider all aspects relevant to the teaching community, including the emoluments, with a view to according them their due status and enabling them to play their legitimate role in the educational process more effectively. Equalising the wage structure and working conditions of teachers under different managements will receive high priority.

Congress will take immediate steps to restore and strengthen the secular character to text-books and books on history. The infiltration of communal elements in the Adult Education Programme will be arrested forthwith and the machinery overhauled suitably.

Sports

A National Scheme of Sports and Games, including indigenous games, for students, will be implemented to encourage

physical culture among the young and enhance the level of the country's achievement. The scheme will cover all educational institutions, ensure comprehensive monitoring the talent at the sub junior, junior and senior levels and devise suitable incentives for outstanding achievement.

For a Healthy Nation

Congress will formulate a National Health Policy which fulfils the needs of the masses, both rural and urban to the fullest extent possible and raises the health standards of the nation as an integral part of the Nation's life in all its facets. Congress considers the promotion of positive health as a vital investment and therefore primarily a responsibility of the State with the fullest participation of the people. A comprehensive health and vital statistics scheme will be launched so as to cover the entire population within ten years. High priority will be accorded to the appointment and training of intermediate and grass-root level Health services, without compromising on standards of proficiency.

In addition to the Schemes currently in operation, a concerted attack will be mounted on all communicable diseases, with high priority to the prophylactic aspect.

The existing pattern of medical education will be reviewed in all its aspects so as to make it more useful and effective for the people.

All systems of medicine will be developed, each in accordance with its own genius and potential. Special support and assistance will be given to all systems for research.

In connection with the International Year of the Child, Congress will launch a comprehensive package programme for children, consisting of immunisation, nutrition and quality education. A complete health check up of all children with the necessary followup at regular intervals, will be part of the scheme.

Ante-natal and maternity services will be expanded and strengthened, with high priority to remote rural areas.

Congress believes that restricting the growth of the population is indispensable for the country's all-round progress. It is

opposed to coercion in any kind and in the implementation of family planning. It will concentrate on educating the people if the small family norm, while making the necessary technical services available on the scale commensurate with the magnitude of the programme. Population education will be fully encouraged and demographic studies integrated with the instructional process.

Literature & Arts

Congress(I) has always believed in promoting literary activity and the arts, so as to preserve our heritage as well as to encourage original creative endeavour, and to enrich our cultural life. Some measures were taken to help writers, artists, people from the film world and others. Their difficulties will now be looked into and a congenial atmosphere created for their work. The intelligentsia should not feel alienated from the mass of people and should be encouraged to participate in nation-building, nudging the Government out of its tendency to get into official and bureaucratic ruts.

Press

Congress(I) is committed to the freedom of the Press and is opposed to Press Censorship. It will give all possible encouragement in the development of small and medium newspapers, including those in the regional language.

Ecology

Congress(I) feels deep concern at the indiscriminate and reckless feeling of trees and the depletion of our forests and wild life, which upsets the ecological balance with recurring misery to the people and disastrous consequences for the country's future. Projects which bring economic benefits must be so planned as to preserve and enhance our natural wealth, our flora and fauna.

In response to the economic and social necessity for ecological planning, the Congress(I) will take effective steps—including setting up in the Government a specialised machinery with

adequate powers—to ensure the prudent use of our land and marine resources by formulating clear policies in this regard for strict implementation.

Persuading State Government

Many of the proposals contained in the foregoing paragraphs pertain to subjects included in the 'State List' under the Constitution, in whose implementation the Central Government is not directly concerned. It will be the endeavour of the Congress(I) to get the proposals implemented in the States where it is in, or would come to, power and persuade other state Governments to pursue action on the lines suggested in the Manifesto.

Congress believes that in a federal set up, a process for co-ordinating programmes falling in the State Sector and for bringing about uniformity in the implementation, monitoring evaluation and follow up is necessary. These aspects were totally neglected by the Janata Party. Congress(I) will accord high priority to them.

The Judiciary

Congress reiterates its faith in the independence of the Judiciary as a necessary concomitant of democracy. Necessary measures will be taken to ensure speedy and inexpensive justice and to enable the courts, particularly High Courts, to reduce pendency. Construction of Court buildings will receive adequate priority.

International Affairs

Congress visualises a dynamic, useful, positive and unifying role for India in International Affairs, particularly in narrowing the gap between the developed and developing nations and in ensuring peace and equality distributed prosperity in the world. On the basis of sovereign equality, mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs. Congress will maintain and strengthen friendly relations with all countries.

Congress will—

- (i) Safeguard the territorial integrity and sovereignty of India against all external threats ;
- (ii) Strengthen the defence capability of India commensurate with her size, natural resources, human talent, strategic position and her long, air and sea frontiers ;
- (iii) Maintain India's dignity, self-respect and national interest and international forums ;
- (iv) Safeguard India's sovereign right to use nuclear technology for her development on peaceful lines ;
- (v) Adhere firmly to the policy of peaceful co-existence and the concept of non alignment as defined by Jawaharlal Nehru ;
- (vi) Forge closer relations among countries of South Asia, the Indo-China States, South East Asia, West Asia, Africa and Latin America ;
- (vii) Enter into bilateral and multi-lateral agreements with them and help them to forge similar agreements amongst themselves for—
 - (a) Peace, cooperation and non-aggression in order to keep the region as a zone of peace, free from outside interference.
 - (b) Strengthening their collective self-reliance vis-a-vis developed countries, in regard to terms of trade, transfer of technology, capital goods and resources etc ;
 - (c) Lending full support to the struggle in these regions against imperialism, colonialism and racialism and in support of the genuine demand of the Palestinian people for their home land ;
 - (d) Making a concerted effort to counter any attempt to destabilise the entire region from Suez to the Far East ;
- (viii) Recognise the new revolutionary Government of Kampuchea.

Overseas Indians

Congress will take steps to solve the problems faced by Overseas Indians in matters such as citizenship, social assimilation, customs formalities, alleged discrimination cultural identity, right of vote etc.

The Call

Congress, reinforced by a renewed faith in its ideals and reassured by the heartwarming response of the people, once again appeals to them to lend their unstinted support to it at this critical juncture in the Nation's march towards a better tomorrow.

We must rededicate ourselves to maintain the integrity of our beloved India and uphold its dignity and prestige.

Let us once more awaken that spirit of nationalism, forge that unity of purpose, strengthen that will and determination which will enable us to take our people forward to socialism.

Let us proceed with our unfinished revolution to end poverty and disparity, to afford social and economic justice to all our people.

Assemblies Elections—1983

TEXT OF THE ELECTION MANIFESTO

The people of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tripura are due to elect their State Legislative Assemblies next month. The Indian National Congress I appeals to the electors of these three States to vote for its policy of defence of integrity and sovereignty of the nation and fight against communal, separatist and divisive forces, inculcating the spirit of Swadeshi and self-reliance, the development of scientific temper and spirit, the strengthening of the Gandhi-Nehru framework of national and international objectives; in short, national unity, nation strength and national progress. They should reject parties and individuals who preach narrow loyalty to region, caste and community.

From the beginning the Congress has been a party of freedom and democracy. Under the inspiration of Gandhiji it became a friend of the poor and the weak and the symbol of secularism. Under Jawaharlal Nehru it became an instrument of peaceful economic transformation. Under Smt. Indira Gandhi's leadership the Congress has helped the nation to make further progress towards social revolution. The country is stronger and economically more dynamic than ever before; all sections, particularly the minorities, the Scheduled Castes and Tribes and the weaker sections, have greater opportunities than at any other earlier point in India's history. The Congress-I Government has paid special attention to the problems of women and the disabled and taken steps to improve their condition. The world recognises India as a force for peace and international goodwill. Country after country has come to grasp India's hand of friendship.

The Indian National Congress is the world's largest democratic party and a unique repository of a whole people's trust. To no other party have a nation's electorate vouchsafed their affection in the manner the Indian people have done to the Congress. The Congress has stood with them in their difficulties; it has led the nation to victory and safety during invasions; it has given them a faith and a vision.

The strategy of planned development initiated by the Congress has laid the foundations of self-reliant economic growth. The country has attained self-sufficiency in foodgrains and ranks among the first ten nations in the world in the matter of industrial growth. Indian scientists and technologists are held in high esteem throughout the world, for their notable work in many advanced areas, such as space, communications and oceanography.

After three years of confusion between 1977 and 1979 the people turned again towards the proven, dedicated and dynamic leadership of the Congress and Smt. Indira Gandhi in 1980. The affairs of the nation were put back on the rails; the economy was pulled out of stagnation; inflation was checked; planning was resumed; science and technology were once again assigned importance; the Twenty Point Programme was revised and reactivated for achieving greater production and helping the poorest sections; the faith of minorities and weaker sections in Government's concern for their protection and upliftment was restored and India's links with the non-aligned and friendship with all nations were refurbished. In short, the period of obscurantism was once again replaced by an age of reason.

Wholesale prices had risen in 1979 (when two non Congressmen were Prime Ministers) by 22.7 per cent. This figure came down to 16.2 per cent in 1983, 5.4 per cent in 1981 and 3.3 per cent in the 11 months of 1982. The production figures in important sectors in the last two years are as follows :

		1980-81	1981-82
Foodgrains	(Mill. tons)	129.87	132.0
Coal	(Mill. tons)	114.0	124.9
Cement	(Mill. tons)	18.55	20.91
Electricity	(Billion (KWH)	111.6	122.9
Railway Freight movement	(Million tons)	195.9	220.4
Irrigated areas	(Mill. Hects)	55.1	57.7

The gross national product, which grew by 7.5 per cent in 1980-81, registered a further increase of 4.5 per cent in 1981-82. Even though international trade has been in the grip of difficulties, our exports rose last year by 7 per cent in terms of volume. A stirring symbol of the resurgent self-confidence of the nation in the recent IX Asian Games held in the Capital. They demonstrated how the country is capable of doing things in a big way. They were a triumph of India's organising abilities.

The commitment of the Indian National Congress to the basic interests of the Indian peasantry has always been deep and abiding. During the past two and half years, the farmers of the country have felt reassured and have shown their appreciation of the Government's policies by producing record harvests. The farmer has received remunerative prices for his produce, while the consumer has been protected through a vastly enlarged and strengthened public distribution system.

On the advice of Government, the Agricultural prices Commission has kept in mind the costs of inputs and also brought about a more equitable relationship between agricultural and non-agricultural prices.

In 1982 wide-spread drought has caused a set back to our plans for increasing agricultural production. Large numbers of people have been hard-hit by erratic behaviour of the monsoon. The Central and the State Governments have taken prompt and effective steps to provide relief to people and to protect their incomes. The Congress-I will carry out fully its resolve to render every possible help to the vulnerable sections

of the people who are facing this natural calamity of unprecedented magnitude. The manner in which drought relief work has been organised reaffirms the deep commitment of the Indian National Congress-I to policies and programmes designed for the upliftment of the weaker sections of the community.

Two years ago Government announced some modifications in industrial policy. Our objectives were fuller utilisation of installed capacity, higher production and productivity, greater employment generation, correction of regional imbalances through special programmes to develop industrially backward areas, promotion of agro-based industries, equitable opportunities for investment, and dispersal of small and growing units in rural as well as urban areas. After declaring 1982 as the productivity year, industrial licensing was further liberalised to refix capacity on basis of best production—a totally new concept. Government is also in the process of finalising certain *further incentives for priority areas in selected lines of production and industrial location*. The new Industrial Policy has already yielded significant results. Despite some difficulties that have arisen during the current year, all possible measures, including liberalisation of credit, have been taken to maintain the momentum of industrial growth.

Government has provided for a massive investment of over Rs. 97,500 crores in the Sixth Plan. It has formulated regional and sub-regional development strategies, particularly programmes for backward regions and hill areas. Vigorous action is being taken to mobilise further resources for development. At the same time, successive budgets of the present Congress(I) Government have provided many reliefs. In view of the international situation, high priority has been given to the evolution of a National energy policy. Coal production is being stepped up. Oil exploration and exploitation are being intensified. In fact, within two years the total domestic production of crude petroleum has doubled. New organisations have been established to suggest alternative energy resources and to explore the resources of the seas around us.

A mid-term review of the plan is being undertaken to provide more resources for critical sectors of the economy such as

oil exploration and production, coal, railways and power and irrigation.

In January, 1982, Government announced the Revised 20-Point Economic Programme. The Revised Programme takes note of the achievement of the original 20-Point Programme in 1975. It is a comprehensive plan of action to bring relief to the poor sections in the land and also to give a thrust to points of growth. This programme is to be carried out throughout the country, effectively and in a time-based schedule so that our pledges to the toiling masses of the people are fully redeemed.

The heightened respect in which Nations hold India today was evident in the discussions Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi has held with world leaders during her visits to the United Kingdom, the United States, the Soviet Union and the countries in the Arab World and in Africa during the year, as well as with major political dignitaries who visited New Delhi, and in the unanimous request by non-aligned nations that India would play host to the Seventh Summit Conference of Non-aligned countries in New Delhi in March, 1983. It will be India's endeavour to consolidate the non-aligned movement. We are also determined to improve our relations with our immediate neighbours, viz. Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, China, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and also to make our voice heard in two of the major international problems of today—disarmament and reduction of disparities between developed and developing nations.

The Indian National Congress has served India for nearly a century. It is the people's custodian of the national inheritance of the struggle for freedom and for social and economic emancipation. The Gandhi-Nehru framework of policies and programmes alone provides a basis for the nation's continued progress and prosperity. These policies have been tested time and again, as indeed has the leadership of the party from Mahatma Gandhi to the present day. The Gandhi-Nehru framework of policies has been enriched and taken forward by Prime Minister Shrimati Indira Gandhi through various measures and initiatives taken by her. The nationalisation of banks,

insurance and coal, the strengthening of the pivotal role of the public sector, rapid strides in the development of oil resources, the 20-point programme for continuing the fight against poverty, the revival of the National Integration Council, the major initiatives in the field of foreign policy which have protected national interests while at the same time buttressing peace and international cooperation, have enriched the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

Not all our problems have been solved. Indeed, each successful step throws up new problems, in addition to the old. The battle for ending poverty is a long and arduous one. Similarly, the task of consolidating the unity of the nation required continuous vigilance. Fissiparous tendencies have not disappeared. Indeed, both external and internal forces are busy fomenting movements that have a tendency to weaken the fabric of national unity. The challenge to the secular foundations of the Indian society comes from various quarters. Pernicious ideologies, which are destructive of communal harmony, continue to be propagated by the RSS, Jamat-e-Islami and other communal organisations. Dangers to national security have not abated. The induction into Pakistan of a sophisticated weaponry has revived tensions in the sub-continent. Therefore, the challenge of development, the challenge of protecting the unity and integrity of the nation and the challenge of safeguarding our independence in a troubled international environment create formidable tasks. Our people have successfully overcome many hurdles. But more, much more, remains to be done. In the elections that we face, we seek a renewal of the mandate for carrying forward the work the Congress has done in the three and a half decades since independence.

Meanwhile, the opponents of the Congress and of Smt. Indira Gandhi have also been active and aggressive. Refusing to learn from their rejection by the people, they are creating communal trouble, fanning violence, stirring up provincial and regional passions and stoking the forces of fascism. They are trying to hamper industrial production. They are unable to put forward any clear cut programme or policies. They have only been indulging in the politics of character assassination. They

have, therefore, to be fought by the determined forces of nationalism.

The total irrelevance of the programmes of the opposition parties is shown by the fact that although they have nothing whatsoever in common ideologically, they are prepared to join hands with one another on the basis of rank opportunism and a totally negative approach. Such unprincipled combination, pose a real threat to democracy since, in the very nature of things, they promote divisive and unwholesome trends.

Defence of democracy sounds strange from parties that launched a vendetta against Shrimati Indira Gandhi and used their brute majority to nullify the verdict of the electorate in expelling her from the Lok Sabha. Systematic suppression of opponents, on numerous occasions through physical violence, has characterised the record of these parties when in power. On the other hand, the Congress-I and its leaders have consistently upheld democratic practices and institutions even in the face of serious reversals. If democracy functions vigorously in India today, credit goes not to those who have used falsehood and calumny to denigrate our leaders but to the painstaking efforts of the Indian National Congress. We are firmly committed to democracy not because it is an instrument of power but because it is the basic prerequisite for the unity and progress of the country.

The Congress-I stands for a strong Centre because that alone would ensure the integrity of the Nation. However, the strength of the Central Government is based upon the strength of the States. There is no conflict between the two. Only within the framework of a planned economy can regional development proceed in a scientific way. Regional aspirations can be satisfied through dynamic development of the national economy. Therefore, the broader national perspective is indispensable for solving problems of backward areas and regions. Congress-I has consistently pursued a policy of channelling resources to areas that have lagged behind in development. Regionalism as the basis of political action can have no meaningful contribution to make to the solution of the basic problems of the people. This fundamental fact has to be clearly grasped.

Otherwise, progress and stability in the wider sense will be jeopardised.

Congress I appeals to the people to the fore-warned of the dangers ahead and to stand by the forces of integration under its banner. It urges the people to defeat the fragmented, opportunistic and destabilising opposition groups so that the process of social and economic transformation is not weakened.

Congress-I seeks the mandate of the people for maintaining stability, for the unity of the nation, for orderly economic and social progress, for a better future for the poor in villages and in cities and for self-reliance as befitting a great nation. With Shrimati Indira Gandhi as its leader, the country is moving forward towards its cherished objectives. In this dangerous decade of the eighties when the world faces the terrible prospect of extinction by a nuclear holocaust, as well as economic disaster by shortsighted policies of some rich nations, the true voice of India, as symbolised by the Indian National Congress-I and effectively articulated by Smt. Indira Gandhi, needs to be strengthened for the good of humanity as a whole. Support and admiration from other countries have been forthcoming in ample measure, matched by equally solid support by the people of India. This is as it should be and should continue hereafter. Congress I therefore invites the people of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tripura to accelerate this process by giving it their overwhelming support.

Eighth General Elections—1984

Lok Sabha Poll

TEXT OF THE ELECTION MANIFESTO

In January 1980, the people of India gave to Congress (I), led by Indira Gandhi, a massive mandate to rebuild the economy and the polity of the nation. During 1977-79 the constant infighting among the constituents of the Janata Government reduced the Central Government to a farce. The economy received crippling blows from sheer ineptitude, India's international standing and strength were undermined. It was a period of shame and sorrow.

Indira Gandhi rehabilitated the shattered economy and placed it on the path of dynamic growth during 1980-84. She fought valiantly to preserve the unity and integrity of India and ultimately made the supreme sacrifice of her own life for this sacred cause.

The Congress(I) salutes the memory of one of the greatest leaders of the twentieth century who led the struggling millions of Indians towards a life of material, cultural and spiritual fulfilment, and strode the world like a gentle colossus in search of peace and international understanding. Indira Gandhi is not amongst us, but her immortal spirit will inspire succeeding generations. The people of India will always cherish her memory because it was she who pulled them out of the depths of despair and made them walk with self-confidence and pride on the path of unity and progress.

The Congress(I) is determined to follow the path shown by Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi. India's democratic system has demonstrated its strength and

resilience following the heinous and dastardly assassination of Indira Gandhi. In Shri Rajiv Gandhi the nation and the Congress(I) have a young and dynamic leader who symbolises the aspirations of our people for stability, continuity and change.

Momentous issues confront the nation. The country faces, as never before in its post-independence history, a serious threat to its unity and integrity. The forces of destabilisation are extremely active. The assassination of Indira Gandhi is part of a wider design. Their vicious and unholy plan is to divide India, for a strong, united and non-aligned India is a potential threat to their international grand design.

It is against this grim background that elections to the Eighth Lok Sabha are being held. The Congress, with its revolutionary tradition of struggle for independence, of unceasing battle against imperialism and neo-colonialism and with its unsurpassed experience of launching and implementing a radical programme of socio-economic transformation, is the only political party capable of responding to the challenge.

The Congress Centenary year begins in December 1984. Millions of Indians have fought under its tricolour flag to win freedom and to build a new society free from social and economic exploitation. This partnership between the people and the Congress(I) is the cornerstone of India's political stability and its unprecedented social and economic advance. This partnership is the guarantee of India's unity and integrity. The Indian National Congress(I) once again invites the people to strengthen this partnership to meet the sinister threat to the unity and integrity of India.

What is the legacy of the Indian National Congress(I)? Let us remember with pride the historic struggle of the Indian people against British imperialism under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Let us remember that Jawaharlal Nehru, the builder of modern India, gave us the guiding principles of democracy, secularism, socialism and non-alignment. He laid the foundations of a technologically modern and self-reliant economy. Indira Gandhi carried forward this monumental task. She strengthened the national economy and made it self-reliant. She worked tirelessly for national integration. India's voice for

peace, disarmament and development was heard with respect in the world. She filled us with self-confidence and a sense of purpose. As the Prime Minister said, "She gave us back our pride".

This legacy belongs to the entire Indian people. Today it is under challenge - challenge from communal, subversive and separatist forces. And from their external allies. Why? The answer to this question needs to be understood by every patriot.

The political, economic and foreign policies followed by the Indian National Congress released powerful forces in the Indian society for ending the age-old divisions of caste, creed and community. The structure of a modern society took shape wherein all citizens can live together and enjoy civil liberties and the fruits of progress without any discrimination on the basis of caste, religion, region or sex. The prolonged stagnation of the economy under the colonial era gave way to the flowering of productive forces in modern agriculture and industry, geared to the task of building an independent and self-reliant economy. A cultural revolution of far-reaching significance was ushered in. Education was brought within the reach of the masses. Its elitist character disappeared. Science and technology made rapid strides changing the texture and the content of the lives of millions. We created technical and scientific manpower which is second to none in competence and dynamism. In foreign policy India refused to subordinate its judgement to any outside power and consistently pursued its chosen policy of promoting a peaceful world and for ending the glaring inequalities between nations.

These policies have given India the strength to play a crucial world role, which is not liked by neo-imperialist and neo-colonial forces determined to maintain their hegemony. Hence their attempt to destabilise India.

The strategy of destabilisation is being pursued with the help of communal, subversive and separatist forces within the country. Violent agitations have been launched. In Assam a determined effort was made to inject communalism into demands which had a different origin. Orderly functioning of

society was sought to be disrupted.

In Punjab the forces of communalism and subversion, which received support from the opposition parties, carried out a systematic plan to plunge the State into disorder and anarchy. All efforts to find a peaceful settlement were frustrated. Centuries old relationship of brotherhood and solidarity between different communities was sought to be destroyed by poisonous propaganda. An organised attempt was made to destroy the very fabric of India's unity and integrity by establishing centres of subversion in places of worship. External forces inimical to India extended every kind of support to these nefarious activities. Indira Gandhi and the Congress(I) stood firm and did not hesitate to take hard decisions to safeguard the nation's integrity.

The Congress(I) is proud that both Hindus and Sikhs are standing shoulder to shoulder to preserve the legacy of unity and brotherhood. The patriotic Sikh community will never accept separatist slogans.

The Indian people will never compromise on the fundamentals of India's unity and integrity. The Congress(I) reflects their invincible nationalism. It will fight with all its strength those elements and forces which are attempting to reverse the historical processes which have led to the unification of India.

The Congress(I) is the only political party which can and will keep the country together. It transcends narrow religious, linguistic, regional and parochial affiliations, having inherited the mantle of Mahatma Gandhi-Jawaharlal Nehru-Indira Gandhi.

The country reaped a bitter harvest from the brief tenure of disparate and heterogeneous parties and groups with limited sectional and territorial appeal and without a coherent policy framework. They appeared in the garb of the Janata Party in 1977. They are active again under different names, but their essence remains the same. Their backward looking, communal and reactionary policies and programmes have no relevance to the tasks facing the Indian people. Their sole interest is to somehow capture political power and thereafter to proceed to undo everything that the people of the country have achieved

through hard toil. Their permutations and combinations, which appear today and disappear tomorrow, are conclusive evidence to show that they are totally unfit to govern this vast and diverse country.

Achievements of the Congress(I) During 1980-84

The Congress(I) promised an effective Government. Indira Gandhi fulfilled this promise.

- (i) The planning process was resumed after its disastrous dismantling under the Janata Party rule.
- (ii) The growth rate in the Sixth Plan will be around 5.4% which is higher than the target.
- (iii) Inflation raging at 21.6% in January 1980 has been brought down to well below 6.5% in 1984-85.
- (iv) Public sector investment has grown at 9.9%.
- (v) *Nearly 94% of the resources needed for investment have been mobilised from internal sources.*
- (vi) India has avoided the debt crisis.
- (vii) India formulated an adjustment programme to deal with the international economic crisis. It is only country to have terminated an International Monetary Fund arrangement without drawing its full amount. India was entitled to draw \$ 5 billion but Government terminated the arrangement after drawing \$ 3.9 billion. There was no compromise with our basic policies of self-reliance and social justice. The success of our adjustment programme has evoked worldwide appreciation.

Let us now look at different sectors In agriculture :

- (i) Foodgrains production rose from 109 million tonnes in 1979-80 to the record level of 151 million tonnes in 1983-84.
- (ii) The Sixth Plan target of 153 million tonnes will be achieved in 1984-85.
- (iii) Fertiliser prices were reduced by 7.5% stimulating an

impressive increase in fertiliser consumption.

- (iv) Support prices for agricultural commodities increased significantly :

Support price for wheat by 29.9 per cent.

Support price for Paddy by 38.4 per cent.

Support price for Coarse Grains by 30.5 per cent.

Support price for Gram by 55.5 per cent.

Support price for Groundnut by 65.8 per cent.

Support price for Rapeseed and Mustard by 46.8 per cent.

Support price for Arhar, Moong and Urad by 40 to 48.5 per cent.

Support price for cotton by 49.1 per cent.

- (v) An average of Rs. 720 crores spent annually on fertiliser subsidy.
- (vi) An average of Rs. 750 crores spent annually on food subsidy to keep the food prices at a reasonable level.
- (vii) Agricultural credit expanded. Rs. 2900 crores disbursed in 1983-84; during the Janata Party rule this level was Rs. 1926 crores.
- (viii) Large scale programmes in all the 5000 blocks to help the small and marginal farmers.

In industry :

- (i) The Congress(I) has led an industrial revival. In 1979-80 industrial production had declined by 1.4%. In 1983-84 a growth rate of 9% is expected.
- (ii) The public sector was discounted and denigrated by the Janata Party Government. Under the Congress(I) the public Sectors production went up by 14.6% in 1982-83 on top of a growth of 33% in 1981-82.
- (iii) Indigenous production of crude oil has shown spectacular increase. Nearly 30 million tonnes in 1984-85 as against 11.7 million tonnes in 1979-80.
- (iv) Dependence on imported oil reduced from 71% to 35%.
- (v) Coal production expected to be 150 million tonnes in 1984-85; in 1979-80 it was 103 million tonnes.
- (vi) Nitrogenous and phosphatic fertilisers have increased

from 2.98 million tonnes in 1979-80 to an expected 4.87 million tonnes in 1984-85.

- (vii) Electricity generation in 1984-85 expected to be 164 billion units; in 1979-80 112 billion units.
- (viii) 1400 MW additional capacity in the power sector will be built up in the Sixth Plan which alone is 50% of the total capacity built up till 1979-80.

The 20-Point Programme of Indira Gandhi has :

- (i) Helped 15 million families to acquire productive assets for raising their incomes.
- (ii) Generated 2030 million mandays of employment through the National Rural Employment Programme and the Rural Landless Labour Employment Guarantee Programme
- (iii) Provided clean drinking water supply to 2.07 lakh villages.
- (iv) Helped 8.5 million persons in slum areas to improve their environment.
- (v) Electrified 1,21,005 villages.
- (vi) Energised 1.7 million pumping sets.

The Janata Party Government put Indian science and technology back by several years. The objective of self-reliance meant little to the Janata coalition. The Congress(I) restored the confidence and pride of Indian scientists. Significant progress has been achieved in the areas of nuclear and space research and in oceanography. The indigenously designed atomic power station in Madras, the INSAT I-B and the expedition to Antarctica are symbols of the onward march of Indian science and technology.

From this magnificent base created by Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, the Congress(I) will take the country forward.

Future Programme : Secularism

Our foremost task is to preserve the unity and integrity of India. The Congress(I) will :

- (i) Strengthen secular forces by building a national consensus against communalism.
- (ii) Spearhead a broadbased mass movement against divisive forces.
- (iii) Take the strongest possible action against communal propaganda.
- (iv) Prevent the misuse of places of worship for preaching communal hatred, for collection and storage of arms or similar illegal purposes.
- (v) Take stern action against instigators of communal violence. It will ensure the safety of life and property of all citizens, irrespective of caste, creed or community.

Minorities

The Congress(I) will continue to safeguard educational, religious and cultural rights of the minorities. The Congress(I) has assured the minority character of the Aligarh Muslim University by law. It reiterates its policy of non-interference with the personal law of the minorities. It has undertaken legislation for protecting Waqf properties and further suggestions will be sympathetically considered.

The Congress(I) will expand opportunities for productive employment for the minorities. It will ensure their adequate representation in government services including the law and order and security forces. A separate cell has been created in the Ministry of Home Affairs to look after the problems of minorities. This cell will be further strengthened and charged with the responsibility for their all round development.

In 1980 the Congress(I) promised that Urdu will be recognised in some States as a second language. Urdu has already been accorded second language status in Bihar. Similar action will be taken in other states.

The Congress(I) stands committed to the promotion of this great and beautiful language which has enriched our composite culture.

Administration

The Congress(I) will :

Ensure prompt, courteous and efficient service from government and quasi-government agencies.

Take all possible measures to speed up decision-making.

Modernise the collection and processing of information.

Institute an effective mechanism for redressing the grievances of the people.

Curb unhealthy politicisation of government services.

Make merit and performance important criteria for advancement.

Corruption in Public Life

The Congress(I) will provide a clean government. It will fight corruption in all spheres of public life. To this end it will:

Build a consensus on the financing of political parties and translate it into legislation.

Take strong measures against tax evasion, smuggling and other economic offences.

Review and strengthen existing procedures and mechanisms for detecting and punishing corrupt practices.

Promote an ethic of austerity and simplicity.

Social and Economic Programme

The Congress(I) reiterates its commitment to socialism and planning. The key objectives of the planning process are :

Speedy removal of poverty.

Development of agriculture and industry on scientific lines.

Expansion and modernisation of the infra-structure for higher rate of growth.

Productive employment for all citizens.

Adequate provision of health and educational facilities.

Special programmes for the scheduled castes, the scheduled

tribes, backward classes and other disadvantaged sections of our society ; and

Balanced regional development.

Employment

Employment will be the major concern of government policy. The Congress(I) will expand employment by :

Increasing agricultural productivity in areas with low yields, specially in the eastern region.

Expanding the rural employment programmes. The National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) will aim at a minimum of 450 million mandays of employment per year. It will be oriented to creation of durable assets in the countryside.

Providing adequate financial support for the Rural Landless labour Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) which aims at guaranteeing employment to at least one member of every family of landless agricultural labour.

Improving the implementation of the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP).

Implementing a massive national plan for urban development and housing.

Expanding education, health, drinking water supply and the rural road network to meet the minimum needs of the people.

Stepping up industrial growth.

Agriculture

The Congress(I) will :

Increase agriculture production by 4% and food production by 5% per annum to ensure self-sufficiency in foodgrains at higher levels of consumption.

Implement a special programme for improving rice productivity, specially in the eastern region which has scope for tremendous improvement.

Step up production of edible oils and pulses to improve

nutritional standards and to save a large volume of foreign exchange.

Expand irrigation potential by at least 14-15 million hectares.

Ensure remunerative prices to the kisans.

Extend price support operations to oilseeds and pulses.

Give special attention to dryland and wasteland agriculture.

Introduce a comprehensive scheme of crop insurance.

Provide adequate incentives for the development of sericulture and fisheries.

Industry

The process of industrialisation has to be accelerated. The Congress(I) will emphasise :

Modernisation.

Upgradation of technology.

Improvement in productivity.

Maximum utilisation of capacity.

Significant enhancement of the capabilities of our management systems.

Public Sector

The Congress(I) will :

Continue the strategy of regarding the public sector as our main instrument for stepping up the rate of industrialisation and for reducing concentration of wealth and power.

Modernise the public sector to increase its efficiency and productivity.

Bring the public sector into new areas of sophisticated technology.

Use the public sector to meet more effectively the demand for mass consumption goods at reasonable prices.

Industrial Sickness

The Congress(I) will formulate a new policy frame to deal

with the phenomenon of sickness in large chunks of textile, jute and engineering industries. They will be made economically and commercially viable to protect the vital interests of labour and to ensure productive use of national resources.

Infrastructure Energy

Energy, transport and communications are critical for the success of our strategy for socio-economic development. There has been phenomenal increase in the demand for infrastructure due to efficient implementation of our programmes. To make up deficiencies in these areas, the Congress(I) will :

Maximise capacity utilisation in thermal power stations and mining projects.

Improve power management systems, maintenance and inventory management and transmission networks.

Promote energy conservation and efficient energy use.

Modernise technology for coal exploration, production, transportation and utilisation.

Electrify maximum number of pumpsets and households.

Establish a national power grid.

Improve the reliability and quality of power supply.

Emphasise substitution of oil by other forms of energy.

Give high priority to oil exploration.

Maximise exploration and utilisation of natural gas.

Develop renewable sources of energy.

Communications

The Congress(I) will :

Expand and modernise the telecommunication system.

Install electronic switching and digitalised networks.

Provide efficient communication channels in rural and urban areas through INSAT-1B.

Set up public service data networks to meet the needs of banking, industry, education, administration & health services.

Develop—sophisticated—telecommunication — technology indigenously.

Use mass communication media to inculcate awareness of our rich common heritage and to catalyse the process of development in the rural and far flung areas of the country.

Education

The Congress(I) will introduce meaningful changes in our educational system, linking education to national integration and to development. It will:

Achieve universal elementary education for the age group 6-14 by 1990.

Generate suitable programmes to improve the physical infrastructure of primary education i.e. school buildings, equipment, libraries, playgrounds.

Remodel teacher's training programmes to stress motivation, accountability and value-orientation.

Align syllabi and curricula with local environment to make education relevant and interesting.

Organise a mass movement to end adult illiteracy.

Introduce recent advances in information and communication technology to improve the quality of secondary and higher education.

Give highest priority to mathematics and science education to face the challenges of an era of unprecedented technological change.

Modernise the courses at secondary and higher education levels to bring them in line with the emerging requirements for new skills in industry, commerce, agriculture and other spheres.

Recast the strategy for vocational and technical education to provide strong linkages with organised industry and self-employment.

Locate technical institutions in rural areas to bring new and relevant technology nearer to the people.

Emphasise quality and excellence at all levels.

Improve access to professional education for meritorious students.

Reduce pressure for expansion of higher education by de-linking degrees from recruitment to jobs under government wherever possible.

Improve the standards of professional education by enforcing adherence to nationally accepted norms.

Improve management structures, particularly in higher education, for creating healthy and vigorous academic communities.

Expose students at all levels to the inspiring history of India's struggle for freedom and to the basis of India's unity through the ages.

Health

The Congress(I) will implement the strategy to achieve the goal of health for all by 2000 AD. It will :

Expand and improve primary health care in rural areas.

Re-organise the health delivery systems to improve the quality of service.

Place essential medicines within the reach of all.

Organise a massive health effort with community participation.

Continue the emphasis on control and eradication of communicable diseases.

Provide more resources for cure of blindness and other physical handicaps.

Revise medical training programmes with focus on community problems.

Encourage Indian systems of medicine.

Promote research in frontier areas, such as bio-technology, and use of electronics in health programmes.

Family Welfare

The Congress(I) will work towards bringing down the net reproduction rate to 1 by 2000 AD. It will :

Propagate the 'two child' norm.

Reduce drastically the infant mortality rate.

Provide incentives for achieving the long-term demographic goals.

Bring about effective integration of family planning programmes with health, nutrition, education and other community welfare programmes.

Expand programmes for child welfare, for the destitute and the handicapped and for elderly persons.

Urban Problems

The Congress(I) expresses its serious concern over the decay of urban life and promises a carefully formulated plan to solve the problems of urban infrastructure. It will :

Implement a national plan of urban development and housing.

Double the rate of construction of housing units during the next 5 years.

Set up a Fund to supplement the efforts of metropolitan authorities and State Governments to improve civic amenities in large metropolitan centres.

Establish at least three new Housing Development Finance Corporations.

Develop viable infrastructure in small and medium towns to prevent population increase in metropolitan centres.

Expand manifold slum improvement programme to provide security of tenure to the dwellers and to improve their habitat.

Introduce new technology to shorten construction time and to economise on scarce inputs.

Introduce necessary changes in policy to encourage investment in housing while ensuring security for tenants.

Water Supply

More than 80% of the 2.31 lakh villages identified as "problem villages" will have been provided safe and clean drinking water in the Sixth Plan. The Congress(I) will :

Cover the remaining villages in the next 5 years.

Provide adequate and safe drinking water to every habitation so as to cover 100% of the rural population during the Seventh Plan.

Supply 100% of the urban population with piped water supply.

Scheduled Castes

It was the Congress(I) which on its return to power in 1980 extended the period of reservation of seats for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the Lok Sabha and in the Legislative Assemblies of the States by 10 years. The Janata Government had failed to do that.

The Congress(I) will :

Continue the emphasis on the social, economic and educational development of scheduled castes.

Introduce larger number of beneficiary-oriented programmes for raising incomes.

Raise 50% of the scheduled caste families above the poverty line in the next 5 years.

Scheduled Tribes

The Congress(I) will :

Implement effectively the strategy of the tribal sub-plan with stress on human resource development with particular reference to women, beneficiary-oriented schemes, drinking water supply, health services, general technical education and technological improvement of agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, village and cottage industries and forestry.

Protect the distinctive culture and way of life of the tribal communities.

Protect the rights of the tribal communities to forest produce.

Build a healthy relationship between the tribal communities and forestry development programmes.

Backward Classes

The Congress(I) has made strenuous efforts for the educational and economic advancement of backward classes. It will continue this policy of positive help to the backward classes to enable them to make an effective contribution to the larger good of the nation.

Women

The Congress(I) will :

Continue to fight the reprehensible practice of dowry and attendant social evils.

Initiate a big programme to improve the educational status of women.

Improve economic opportunities for women.

20-Point Programme

The Congress(I) dedicates itself to a more comprehensive implementation of the 20 point programme.

It will :

Reduce the percentage of people below the poverty line to less than 10 by 1994-95.

Formulate poverty alleviation programmes for the next 5 years in the perspective.

Provide productive assets to the poor through effective land reforms and other measures, specially the Integrated Rural Development Programme.

Revitalise the panchayat institutions at different levels to give them the major responsibility for development and welfare programmes and to ensure people's participation.

Working Class

The Congress(I) has raised workers' wages substantially in the last 5 years. The Congress(I) will :

Ensure for the working class steadily rising levels of real income based on rising productivity.

Expand services for education and training, health, housing and cultural advancement of the workers.

Emphasise labour participation in management.

Science and Technology

The Congress(I) believes that indigenous development of science and technology is of decisive importance for attaining self-reliance. It will :

Define national goals in the major socio-economic sectors and build science and technology missions around these tasks.

Create new centres of excellence in carefully identified areas and around individual scientists or groups of outstanding merit.

Use science and technology for accelerating rural development and welfare of weaker sections.

Emphasise the development of a rational and scientific outlook.

Give priority to areas like information systems, natural resource management systems, integrated energy systems, micro-electronics, bio-technology and oceanography.

Improve the working and living conditions of scientists.

Involve the Universities in a greater measure in the advancement of science and technology.

Environment

The Congress(I) will :

Optimise the use of natural resources so that while meeting the current needs of growth, the resource base is oriented to sustainable development.

Formulate a national conservation strategy to promote rational resource management.

Establish biosphere reserves in different bio-geographic regions.

Emphasise environmental concerns in education and in information media.

Take effective steps to control air and water pollution.

Establish Task Forces for eco-development programmes.

Protect existing forest wealth.

Undertake a massive afforestation programme.

Youth

The Congress(I) attaches high priority to the intellectual, cultural and physical development of our youth and will frame suitable programmes for the purpose.

Culture

The Congress(I) will :

Conserve our ancient heritage.

Encourage our craftsmen who are carrying on centuries-old aesthetic traditions.

Help create an environment for creative endeavour.

Involve the intelligentsia in the strengthening of secular, rational and scientific values in our society.

Legal Reform

The Congress(I) will :

Enable the poor and the downtrodden to have access to our judicial system for justice.

Enact a comprehensive legislation to place on a sound footing the scheme for legal aid to the poor.

Take effective steps to reduce delays in disposal of cases and to bring down arrears.

Fiscal Policy

The Congress(I) has kept its promise to reduce the burden of tax on low income groups and to provide substantial incentives for financial savings. It will :

Abolish the Compulsory Deposit Scheme for taxpayers.

Take vigorous measures against tax avoidance and tax evasion by upper income groups.

Rationalise both direct and indirect taxation.

Seventh Plan

The Congress(I) will formulate the Seventh Five Year Plan in the light of policy objectives and goals outlined in this manifesto. It will aim at a growth rate of over 5% per annum in the next 5 years. Preliminary calculations suggest that for achieving this growth rate a public sector outlay of Rs. 180,000 crores will be required. The Congress(I) pledges itself to implement a big and a bold plan to give substance to the slogan—'Food, Work and Productivity'.

Foreign Policy

The Congress(I) reiterates its firm resolve to pursue the policy of non-alignment, peace, cooperation and friendship. It will :

Promote an active role by India in reducing tension, fear and suspicion in the world to avert the grim threat of nuclear war.

Pursue the initiatives taken by Indira Gandhi as the chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement for promoting peace.

Persevere in the task of restructuring the present international economic order on the basis of quality.

Build peaceful, friendly and cooperative relations with our neighbours.

Give content to the South Asian Regional Cooperation Programme.

Continue the process of normalisation of India's relations with China.

Further develop India's friendly and cooperative relations with the USSR and other socialist countries.

Develop cooperation with the United States of America in areas of mutual interest.

Freeze closer political and economic relations with the A-

world and the countries of South-West and South East Asia, the Far-East and the Pacific Africa, Latin America, the Caribbeans, North America and Western and Eastern Europe.

Lend full support to the struggle against imperialism, colonialism and racialism.

Support the genuine demands of the Palestinian people for their homeland.

Protect India's vital security interests in the context of the threat posed by the induction of large scale sophisticated weaponry in Pakistan and into the Indian Ocean.

The Congress(1) pledges itself to fight against policies of destabilisation which have increasingly come to the fore in recent years to subvert the independence and integrity of newly independent countries.

Democracy

The Congress(1) is the standard bearer of democratic values. It will :

Preserve the unity and integrity of India.

Defend democracy against all attempts to subvert it through violence and through movements which weaken the confidence of the people.

Uphold the freedom of the press and the independence of the judiciary.

Strengthen the rule of law.

Enhance the capability of our institutions to secure the rights of the weaker sections.

Centre-State Relations

The basic philosophy of the Congress(1) is that the States should be strong to effectively discharge their obligations to the people for social, economic and cultural development. This is broadly guaranteed by the present scheme of the Constitution. At the same time a strong Centre is required to safeguard the country's unity and integrity, to ensure the success of the

planning process and to direct the nation's endeavour for a social and economic order based on socialism. There is no contradiction between a *strong Centre and strong States*. The two reinforce each other. However, the opposition parties are making concerted efforts to weaken the Centre. A weak Centre is totally inconsistent with the imperatives of India's unity and integrity and its continued advancement in *social and economic* fields. Internationally a weak Centre will be subject to political and economic pressures which India has been able to resist so far because of the wisdom of the founding fathers of our Constitution.

The Congress(I) will soon complete its first 100 years as the main spokesman and the vanguard of the Indian people. It is about to enter the second century of its labour for the people of India with the same vigour and zeal. Its ideology and its concrete work for the masses have contributed to India's strength and stability.

Our security environment today is extremely fragile. Only a strong and united India can provide stability to the entire South-Asian region and thus contribute to world peace. By virtue of its historical experience, achievements and promise, the Congress(I) is the only party that can guarantee stability and cohesion to India.

The overwhelming affection and support of the people for the Congress(I) has been a constant source of inspiration and renewal for the party. At this critical moment of trial in the history of the nation, the Congress(I) appeals to the people to support it as generously and abundantly as they have done in the past.

Nothing less than the unity and integrity of the country is at stake today. Powerful forces of destabilisation are at work. India is the prize they have long sought. Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi thwarted their unholy designs. The challenge, however, remains and must be met. The Congress(I), fully conscious of the patriotism of the Indian people, appeals to them to rally round its banner at this critical juncture to defend India's freedom and unity and to carry forward the task of building socialism.

The Congress(I), under the leadership of Shri Rajiv Gandhi, will forge an indomitable will among our people to conquer *all obstacles in the path of unity and progress*. The Congress(I) alone stands between unity and disintegration, between stability and chaos and between self-reliance and economic dependence. The choice is indeed stark ; yet it is crystal clear. A vote for the Congress(I) is a vote for a strong, united and prosperous India.

Lok Sabha & Assembly Elections (Punjab)—1985

TEXT OF THE ELECTION MANIFESTO

Nation's Faith in Congress(I)

1. In the eighth Lok Sabha poll, the people of India gave a massive mandate to the Congress(I) and reaffirmed their faith in the unity and integrity of India. They also put their stamp of approval, as never before, on stability at the Centre and raised their voice, loud and clear, against all fissiparous forces. Their reaffirmation of faith in the ideology and leadership of Congress(I) is a tribute to the maturity and wisdom of the electorate. The people showed utmost awareness of the stakes involved at this critical juncture in the Nation's history.

The Historic Accord of July 24, 1985

2. It was during the last Lok Sabha election campaign that the President of Indian National Congress(I) and the Prime Minister of India, Shri Rajiv Gandhi gave an unequivocal assurance that the Government of India would give top priority to solving the Punjab problem. His relentless and sincere efforts since the new Government took over were crowded with success on July 24, 1985 when the historic Memorandum of Settlement was signed with Sant Harchand Singh Longowal. Underlying this settlement was the tremendous response of the people of Punjab to the moving appeal of the Prime Minister to end violence and to bring the State back to the path of dynamic social and economic advance. The Accord marks "the beginning of a new phase of working together to build the

country and strengthen the Nation's unity and integrity" (Prime Minister's speech in Parliament on July 24, 1985). This Accord has been welcomed by all political parties and the people at large, both in the country as well as abroad. It should be our duty to help to speedily implement all clauses of this Accord to the entire satisfaction of all concerned. The Congress(I) Party is determined to implement the same faithfully.

3. Elections have been called in Punjab for the Lok Sabha seats in the State as well as for the State Legislative Assembly. Through the elections to the Parliamentary seats and Assembly constituencies in Punjab, the Congress(I) Party seeks mandate of the people in support of the Accord and gives its commitment to carry out the same in letter and in spirit, with the support of the people. Every vote cast for the Congress(I) will be a vote for peace, unity and brotherhood desired by the people of the State. It will be a vote cast against the forces of violence and disruption. It will be a vote for the people of Punjab walking in step with the rest of the Indian people towards their common national goals.

4. The Congress(I) reminds the people that the situation in Punjab was complicated by external involvement. We must not forget that forces of destabilisation are looking for opportunities to weaken India. Indiraji used to warn us to beware of these powers which wanted to keep India down. For such powers, the Punjab Accord is a great set back. Therefore, a resounding endorsement of the Accord will be a fitting reply to forces that wish to weaken India's unity and integrity.

5. The Congress(I) is seeking the votes of the people of Punjab on the basis of its record of work for strengthening the bonds between different communities of our vast country. For the Congress(I), elections are not an end in themselves; they are a means for mobilising the people for building a secular, democratic and socialist society in our country, for furthering the cause of secularism and national integration, and for defeating those who work against the interests of the country as instruments of external powers to weaken and balkanise India.

6. Efforts are being made to spread confusion among the people by asking them to boycott the elections. The Congress(I)

has not the least doubt that the people of the State would neither be misled by those who do not have the welfare of the people at heart nor be coerced by violence to stay away from the electoral process. On the contrary, the Congress(I) is confident that the people would silence and immobilise these forces by an enthusiastic exercise of their most precious right, the right to vote.

Our Performance

7. Over the last few decades, the Congress (I) in Punjab, with the help of the Centre, has made considerable progress for the benefit of the people in all fields—Agricultural production, Industrial uplift, Transport and Communications, raising the living standards of the weaker sections of society, and social, educational and cultural transformation of the masses.

8. In the power sector, 922 MW of generating capacity (659 MW in the State sector plus 263 MW in the Central sector) was added during the Sixth Plan period. Historically, this was an unprecedented achievement. The Bhatinda Thermal Plant attained a plant load factor of 60 per cent, thus enabling the Punjab State Electricity Board to win a special national award.

9. The spectacular progress of agriculture in Punjab has continued to dazzle the world. A record production of over 100 lakh tonnes of wheat and 50 lakh tonnes of rice was achieved in 1984-85. Similarly, cotton production reached a very high level of over 12 lakh bales. During the Sixth Plan period new irrigation potential of about 2 lakh hectares was created by the lining of 1520 kms of water courses and 3900 kms of canals.

10. All the villages in the State are now connected with metalled roads. A striking achievement of Punjab is the electrification of all villages. Significant progress has been made on the industrial front, particularly in the small scale sector.

11. The Congress(I) is acutely conscious of the disruption of economic activity in the State in the last few years. Major steps have been initiated to stimulate industrial development of

the State. Two major projects are being undertaken in the State to open new opportunities for employment. Work has already begun on the railway coach factory at Kapurthala which will cost Rs. 180 crores. Its first phase is expected to be completed in the next two years. Very significant employment potential for skilled and unskilled youth will be created. A diesel component factory is being constructed at Patiala. An expenditure of Rs. 37 crores has already been incurred. Additional expenditure of Rs. 75 crores will be incurred during the Seventh Plan period.

12. It is proposed to set up a captive power plant for the fertiliser factory at Bhatinda in order to meet its capacity utilisation. The semi-conductor complex at Chandigarh would be further extended during the Seventh Plan period.

13. In the power sector it is proposed to create fresh capacity of 767 MW during the Seventh Plan period. Nearly Rs. 500 crores will be spent on Thein dam, benefits from which will flow during the Eighth Plan period. Thus infrastructural requirements for an intensive phase of industrialisation in Punjab are being taken care of.

14. Alongwith high priority to industry to generate employment for educated youth, full care is being taken to safeguard the interests of kisans. A provision of Rs. 270 crores will be made for major and medium irrigation schemes, including a programme for modernisation of the existing irrigation system.

15. To develop the skills of Punjabi youth, a Regional Engineering College will be set up at Jalandhar. It will be a joint venture of the Central and the State Governments. The State Government will provide developed land for the college and the Centre will bear the expenses for the building and other infrastructure. The college will start functioning during the Seventh Plan.

16. Punjabi culture has spread far and wide. It has travelled beyond the borders of India. To conserve the artistic and cultural heritage of Punjab and its neighbouring States, a Zonal Cultural Centre is being set up at Patiala. The Centre will provide facilities for creative development of performing arts and literary talent. The establishment of this Centre shows

the strong commitment of Congress(I) to raising the cultural standards of the masses.

17. These programmes are an integral part of the nation's economic effort during the Seventh Plan and can be completed only if the people of the entire country including Punjab lend a hand in implementing them. The programmes in Punjab will benefit not only the people of the State but the entire nation. Likewise, the efforts undertaken by the people in other States would benefit Punjab. We are one country and one people.

18. The forthcoming elections for Lok Sabha and for the State Assembly provide the people an opportunity to support and subsequently help in the implementation of the Congress (I)'s policies and programmes at the State level.

19. Our foremost task is to preserve the unity and integrity of India. The Congress(I) will :

strengthen secular forces by building a national consensus against communalism ;

help in curbing communal violence. It will ensure the safety of the life and property of all citizens, irrespective of caste, creed or community.

Minorities

20 The Government of India has agreed to consider the formation of an All India Gurdwara Bill. The Congress(I) will lend its full support to the action to be taken by the Government of India.

21. The Congress(I) will ensure adequate representation in Government services, including law and order and security forces, to all communities. A separate cell has been created in the Ministry of Home Affairs to look after the problems of the minorities.

22. The Congress(I) stands committed to the promotion of the great and beautiful Punjabi language which has enriched our composite culture.

*Administration***23. The Congress(I) will :**

- ensure prompt, courteous and efficient service by Government and quasi-Government agencies ;
- take all possible measures to speed up decision making ;
- modernise the collection and processing of information ;
- institute an effective mechanism for redressing the grievances of the people ;
- curb unhealthy politicalisation of Government services ;
- make merit and performance important criteria for advancement ; and
- provide a clean Government and fight corruption.

20-Point Programme

24. The implementation of the 20-Point Programme shall be undertaken with greater vigour and zeal. The programme will be restructured to accord greater emphasis to the anti-poverty components which have special relevance to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, backward classes and women.

Employment

25. Employment will be the major concern of Government policy. The Congress(I) will expand employment by :

- expanding the Rural Employment Programme. The National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) will aim at a minimum of 450 million man days of employment per year. It will be oriented to the creation of durable assets in the countryside in Punjab.

- providing adequate financial support for the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) which aims at guaranteeing employment to at least one member of every family of landless agricultural labour ;

- improving the implementation of the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) ;

implementing a massive national plan for urban development and housing ;

expanding education, health, drinking water supply and the rural road network to meet the minimum needs of the people ;
stepping up industrial growth.

Agriculture and Industry

26. The Congress(I) will :

provide reasonable prices to agriculturists ;

step up production of edible oils and pulses ;

expand irrigation potential ; and continue its efforts to achieve for the farmers a reasonable price for their produce.

set up agro-industries in the State to help the rural population ;

emphasise modernisation and upgradation of technology ;

strive for improvement in productivity, maximum utilisation of capacity and significant enhancement of the capabilities of our management systems ; and

suspend recovery of loans given to farmers, loanees of flood-hit areas and others in view of flash floods and terrorist activities in the State.

River Waters and Nuclear Power Plans

27. The Congress(I) will :

ensure adequate water supply from the Ravi-Beas system to farmers ;

expedite construction of the S.Y.L. Canal to complete it by 15th August, 1986 ;

get the Thein Dam completed expeditiously to provide ample waters to the farmers ;

work for the setting up of a nuclear plant in the State to generate power in abundance to feed industries of various types and agriculture, besides commercial and domestic requirements.

Education and Health

28. The Congress(I) will introduce meaningful changes in our educational system, linking education to National Integration and to development.

29. It will also implement the strategy to achieve the goal of "health for all" by 2000 A.D.

30. The Congress(I) will :

reduce drastically the infant mortality rate ;

provide incentives for achieving the long-term demographic goals ;

bring about effective integration of the Family Planning Programme with Health, Nutrition, Education and other Community Welfare Programmes.

expand welfare programmes for children, destitutes, handicapped and elderly persons ;

develop a viable infrastructure in small and medium towns to prevent population increase in metropolitan centres ; and

expand manifold the Slum Clearance Programme to provide security of tenure to the dwellers and to improve their habitat.

Scheduled Castes/Tribes

31. The Congress(I) will :

continue the emphasis on the social, economic and educational development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes ;

introduce a large number of beneficiary-oriented programmes for raising incomes ; and

raise 50% of the Scheduled Castes families above the poverty line in the next 5 years.

Backward Classes

32. The Congress(I) has made strenuous efforts for the educational and economic advancement of Backward Classes. It will continue this policy of positive help to the Backward Classes to enable them to make an effective contribution to the larger good of the Nation.

*Women and Youth***33. The Congress(I) will :**

continue to fight the reprehensible practice of dowry and other social evils ;

initiate a big programme to improve the educational status of women ;

improve economic opportunities for women ;

attach high priority to the intellectual, cultural and physical development of youth and frame suitable programmes for the purpose.

Seventh Five Year Plan

34. The Congress(I) President, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, has already spelt out the basic targets of the Seventh Five Year Plan as follows :

"In a few months we shall begin the Seventh Plan. The war against our old enemies—poverty, unemployment, disease and ignorance—continues. In the weeks ahead, we shall review our existing policies and programmes to ensure that our basic objectives of growth with justice are realised within the stipulated time table."

35. The future programme of the Congress(I), as enumerated in the Party's manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections held last year is an eloquent testimony to the efforts of Government to bring about a transformation in the lives of the common masses.

*Legal Reforms***36. The Congress(I) will :**

enable the poor and the down-trodden to have quicker and better access to our judicial system for justice ;

enact a comprehensive legislation to place on a sound footing the scheme for legal aid to the poor .

take effective steps to reduce delays in the disposal of cases and to bring down arrears.

Welfare of Ex-Servicemen and Servicemen's Families

37. The Congress(I) will put in special efforts in every way to look after the interests and welfare of ex-servicemen and serving personnel's families.

38. The comprehensive policies and programmes of the Congress(I) are aimed at improving the standard of living of millions of people in the villages and cities of Punjab. These can be implemented only by a Congress(I) Government in Punjab which is committed in toto to the programme. The Central leadership has pledged itself to a time-bound programme of action for the progress and prosperity of Punjab. This highlights the importance of voting the Congress(I) to power in Punjab and of ensuring the victory of its candidates for the Lok Sabha.

39. The Congress(I) is the only guarantee for the unity and integrity of the nation, and for a bright and assured future. The Congress(I) appeals to the electorate to rally round its banner for the inspiring task of building a new Punjab—a glorious Punjab.

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